■ News / A2

State of calamity declared in Baguio due to meningococcemia

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Over 300 logging cases in Central Luzon getting stale in courts

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2 cops among six robbery suspects killed in Bulacan

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Schumacher pledges $10-M relief aid for tsunami victims

■ Metro / A17

Atlanta bldg. officials in Greenhills block Nida slay reenactment

DOJ presses humanitarian reason for Jalosjos pardon

By Luige A. del Puerto and Carlito Pablo

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday pressed the humanitarian tack concerning moves to seek a pardon for convicted child rapist Romeo Jalosjos.

Gonzalez told reporters in a forum at the Sitio Fernandina in San Juan that if the law

DOJ PRESSES/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

16 travel agencies divert tourists to RP

By Jerome Aning

TALK about one man's famine being another man's feast.

At least 16 travel agencies in Japan have diverted to the Philippines dozens of tourists originally bound for the Maldives, while a Filipino travel website doubled its average daily

16 TRAVEL/ A9

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

Thursday, January 6, 2005 ★★ 38 pages / 3 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 29 P18

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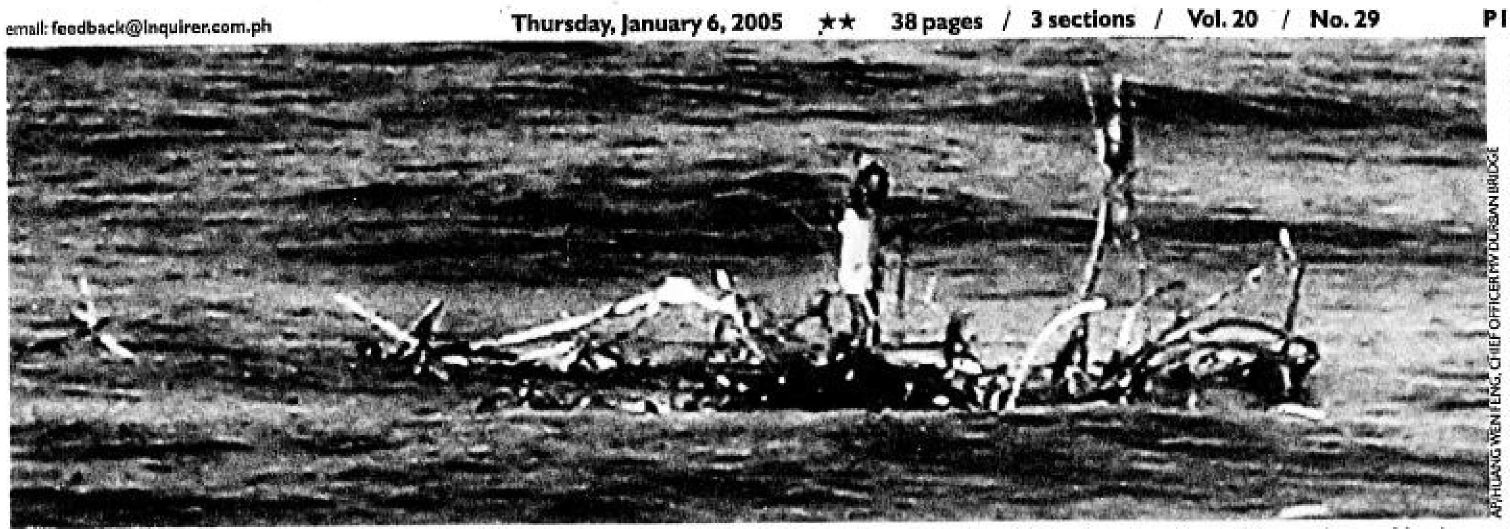


AP/HUANG WEN FENG, CHIEF OFFICER MV DURBAN BRIDGE

THIS ONE'S FOR RIPLEY: A resident of Aceh named Rizal Shahputra (above, and at right) was found alive about 160 km from the shores of the province on Monday, eight days after walls of killer waves devastated this special territory of Indonesia in the island of Sumatra. He survived floating on huge tree branches and debris.

Horrors 'worse than war'

Powell shocked by destruction on Sumatra isle

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia—Destruction on Indonesia's tsunami-wracked Sumatra island is the worst that US Secretary of State Colin Powell has ever seen, the battle-seasoned war veteran said as he prepared for a meeting of world leaders to coordinate history's largest relief operation.

"I cannot begin to imagine the horror that went through the families and all of the people who heard this noise and then had their lives snuffed out by this wave," Powell, formerly chair of the joint US chiefs of staff, said Wednesday after flying over flattened villages along Sumatra's northern coast, which was home to two-thirds of the nearly 150,000 killed across Asia.

"I've been in war and I've been through a number of hurricanes, tornados and other relief operations, but I've never seen anything like this," he added.

From an altitude of a few hundred meters, Powell and his entourage saw not a tree or building standing along the coast. City block after city block in Banda Aceh, the main city on northern Sumatra, had been swept clean. A large ship lay on its side, half submerged in water and mud.

The former US Army general said he saw "how the wave came ashore, pushing everything in its path—cars, ships, freighters overturned—all the way up to the foothills, and then starting up the foothills until finally the waves came to a stop."

So far US$2 billion has been pledged to relief efforts in 11 countries hit by the Dec. 26 quake off the western coast of Indonesia that triggered waves causing deaths as far away as East Africa.

But the challenges are enormous, with millions homeless and threatened by disease. The United Nations said it would build camps on Sumatra for up to 500,000 people.

HORRORS/ A9

SURVIVORS Florante Encarnacion (left) and Rolando Lagao, both Filipino entertainers in the resort town of Phuket, Thailand, are glad to be home at the Naia on Tuesday. Lagao gathers his wife in his arms. ROGER MARGALLO

24-hour gov't hotline brings good, bad news

A FILIPINO mother's grief turned to joy when she learned that her son, who was initially reported to have died in the tsunamis that engulfed Thailand's famed Phuket resort, was alive.

Another woman, inquiring by phone, fell silent when told that her daughter's body had been found in the once-idyllic tourist paradise, where she worked as a ballet teacher.

The Philippines escaped the earthquake and tsunami onslaught, but the agony plays out in the emergency center of the Overseas Workers' Welfare Administration (Owwa), where officials surrounded by maps and phones keep a 24-hour watch on the fate of Filipino workers in disaster-hit areas.

At least five Filipinos have been confirmed dead and 13 are missing in the Dec. 26 catastrophe, all in Thailand.

"The hardest part is when you tell somebody about a death," said welfare officer Hector Cruz, recalling how he struggled to tell a mother about the death of her daughter, also a worker in Phuket.

"Are you ready ma'am?" Cruz recalled asking the mother on the phone, "We have confirmation that your daughter is dead."

"There was a pause on the other line," he said.

Another officer, Eduardo Mendoza Jr., tried to console the parents of 24-year-old Marcela Albao, a dancer in Phuket who had dreamed of lifting her family from poverty in Abra province.

Albao was with two Filipino friends in a ground-floor room of the seaside Sofitel Magic Lagoon Hotel when a

24-HOUR GOV'T/ A9

Mike A sends emissary to nip mad Rosebud

By Fe Zamora

HELL hath no fury like a "Rosebud" scorned.

To appease the former antinarcotics agent, President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, sent his PR man to Mary "Rosebud" Ong's safe house in Camp Aguinaldo on Tuesday night with the message: Please don't talk to media.

But Ong, who has accused Arroyo of blocking the release of her "agent's fees" worth at least P3 million, refused to be gagged.

"GMA (The President) was grinning from ear to ear when I attacked Ping (Sen. Panfilo Lacson), but they will gag me if I attack another civilian who is the First Gentleman (FG)?" an irate Ong told Arroyo's PR man, Boyet Antonio.

Ong also lashed out at Malacañang's alleged plan to relieve Col. Marlu Quevedo, chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces (Isafp), for his "inability to control me."

"They praised (then Isafp chief Victor) Corpus for letting me talk against Ping without control from anybody, and now

MIKE A/ A10

2 Cabinet men say gov't should honor deal

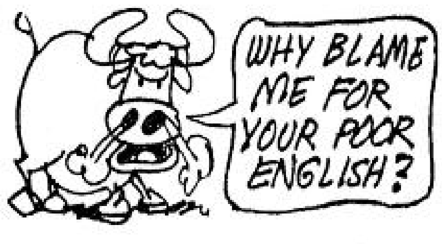
By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Armand N. Nocum

THE GOVERNMENT should honor a contract with police agent Mary "Rosebud" Ong if there is one.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, former chief of the Philippine National Police, made this statement yesterday after Ong accused First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo of blocking the payment of P3 million to her as fees for providing information to the police since 1998.

"I think we should support her. You know she's been helping specially the police during my time and if ever there is really a contract then we should honor the contract," Mendoza said at a press conference in Malacañang about another issue—the government takeover of Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

2 CABINET/ A10



WHY BLAME ME FOR YOUR POOR ENGLISH?

Cops to be trained to keep cool, speak good English

By Christian V. Esguerra

TOUGH to be a cop these days. On top of being a strict law enforcer, he has to speak good English, too, and struggle to keep his cool.

That's today's cop as envisioned by Philippine National Police Director General Edgar Aglipay.

The country's top cop had also initiated values formation and physical fitness programs from which cops are expected to emerge with their waistlines and "bad habits" such as smoking and drinking trimmed down.

Aglipay has called in the experts. Professors from the University of the Philippines, Ateneo de

COPS/ A8

TALES OF THE CITI

US bank says client 'forgot' her investment

By Doris C. Dumlao
Business

(Third of four parts)

THE FINANCIAL loss incurred by businesswoman Concepcion Poblador was the price she paid for "forgetting" for years that she had an investment in Benpres Holdings Corp. with Citibank as her trustee, according to the bank's counsel.

Citibank acknowledged that it had offered a P1-million settlement to Poblador but said it did so "in the spirit of amicable settlement," but without prejudice to its position.

Poblador deposited $200,000 (then equivalent to P5.7 million) with the main office of Citibank in Makati City on June 20, 1997.

The bank's unwavering position, of course, is that Poblador's allegations of fraud and wrongdoing are unfounded. It said it had no motive in risking its reputation in exchange for earning a minimal amount in trust fees. As trustee, Citibank claimed to have earned only $375 a year from Poblador's investment in Benpres bonds.

"Moreover, complainant conveniently failed to explain why she accepted and utilized the interest that the Benpres bonds were bringing her for about four years amounting to about $50,000," the bank said in its reply sent to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"And it was only about four years later, when the Benpres bonds were no longer attractive and in demand, that complainant suddenly questioned her trust account and started accusing her

US BANK/ A8

SPECIAL REPORT

Project Editor:
Juan V. Sarmiento Jr.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/01/06/05

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Second FRONT PAGE
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Palace contests $62-M payment

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Philip C. Tubeza

MALACAÑANG yesterday said it would push ahead with its plan to open the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 in six months even as it contested a lower-court decision ordering government to pay $62.34 million (P3.5 billion) to the disputed facility's contractor, the Philippine International Air Terminals Co.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said at a press briefing the Manila International Airport Authority would continue with the inventory and inspection of the disputed facility for structural defects that would need fixing before the scheduled opening in June.

Transportation and Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza said only legal issues, not monetary considerations, would stop the government from opening the new terminal in six months.

"The government has the money. It's a matter of what amount and who gets what. We will open in six months, barring legal complications," he said.

Yesterday, Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo asked the Pasay Regional Trial Court to reverse its decision ordering the payment of $62.34 million to the Piatco consortium.

In an urgent motion for reconsideration, Benipayo criticized Judge Henrick Gingoyon for issuing the order even though Piatco had not asked the court for the release of the money deposited in the Land Bank of the Philippines.

The lower court had authorized the expropriation of the terminal last month but on Tuesday ordered the government to hand over $62.34 million to the consortium as partial payment.

Benipayo said the money should have been released only after the court had determined the just compensation owing to Piatco and after government was able to fully inspect the terminal to find out if it was safe to operate.

"This unilateral and uncalled for action is irregular. At the very least, there ought to have been a motion asking for the withdrawal of the amount ... and notice to the plaintiffs to give them the opportunity to be heard on the matter," he said.

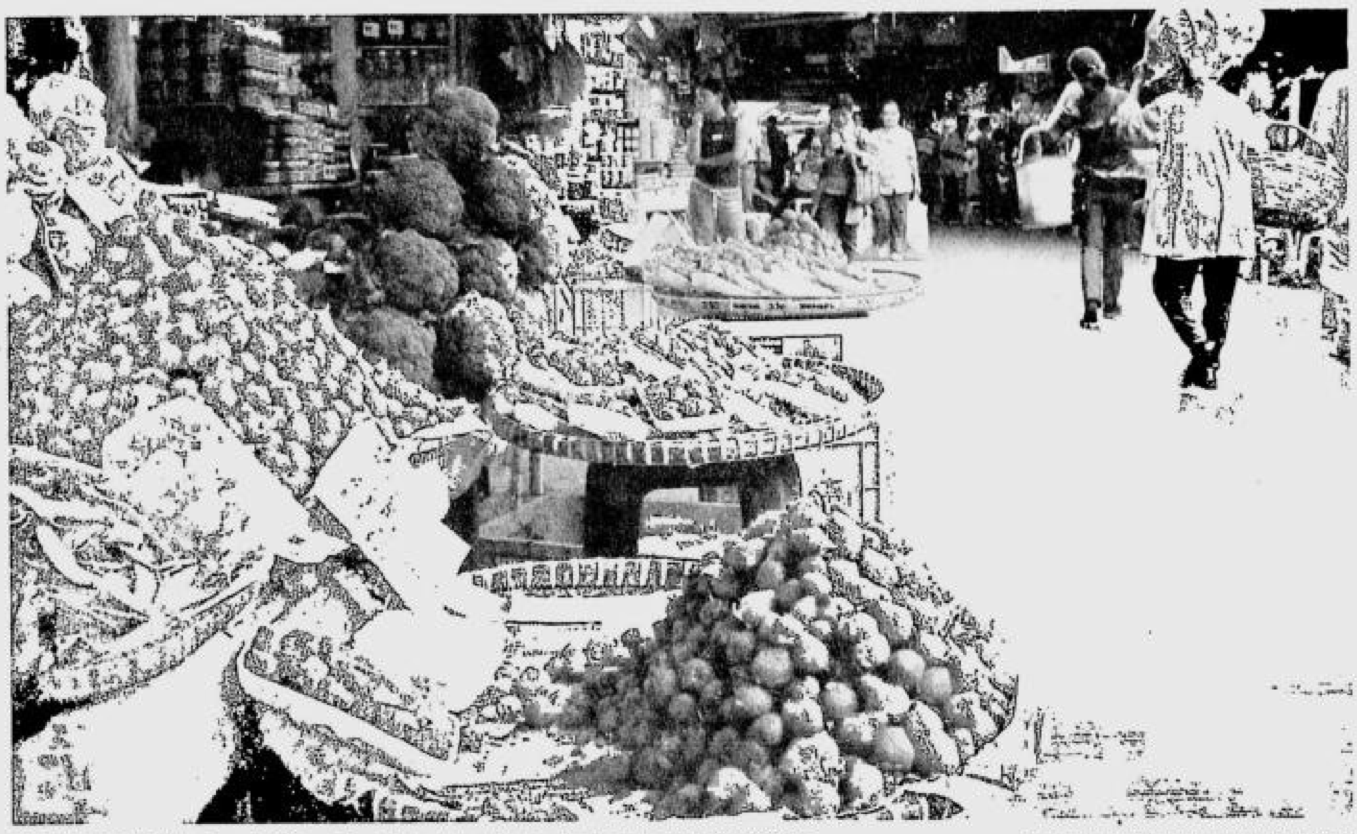
He said it would be "rank injustice" for the government to be ordered to hand over to Piatco the provisional deposit that it made with the court when it filed the case of expropriation against the consortium.

The plaintiffs in the case were the Department of Transportation and Communications, the MIAA, and the government represented by Ermita.

Ermita argued that the order should not take effect until the court has ruled on the motion for reconsideration filed by Benipayo, who has said that the release of the provisional deposit could be prejudicial to the competing claims of other claimants like Piatco's German-based shareholder Fraport and Japanese contractor Takenaka Corp.

Benipayo also contested the $62.34 million amount ordered as payment. He said that what was available for the court's disposition "for purposes of the provisional deposit for the writ of possession" was only P3 billion, or $53.61 million, which was the "assessed value" of the terminal required under the Rules of Court.

He also challenged the court's order that prohibited government from "performing acts of ownership" like awarding concessions, adding that the court had issued to it a writ of possession which already entitled the government "to perform all acts necessary to achieve the public purpose for which the expropriation was instituted."



MARKET SCENE in Baguio City reflects the state of calamity declared by city officials. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Baguio declared a calamity area

By the PDI N. Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—The city government has declared Baguio a calamity zone enabling it to access P12 million in calamity funds to combat meningococcemia, a fatal meningitis strain that has killed 24 people in the Cordillera, Vice Mayor Peter Rey Bautista said on Wednesday.

But Department of Health officials said Baguio is not the source of meningococcemia. Latest reports said suspected meningococcemia cases were recorded in Metro Manila, Dagupan City, Quirino and Negros Occidental.

"Baguio does not have the monopoly of the disease," said Dr. Antonio Bautista, DOH Cordillera spokesperson and chief of the medical surveillance team monitoring meningococcemia cases.

Bautista said only five local cases have been confirmed by laboratory tests as the deadly strain, although government doctors have documented 42 suspected meningococcemia cases between March and December 2004.

Six new cases were being monitored since Jan. 1, Bautista said.

He said almost 30 percent of the population are natural carriers of the bacteria, and it is likely the disease has been exported to the summer capital.

Bautista said the city's problem is the medical supplies. He said reports about meningococcemia have scared private hospitals into buying most of the meningococcemia vaccines.

"We have enough money. Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit gave Baguio P2.7 million (to implement meningococcemia containment protocols), but vaccines have become scarce and the Baguio government is hard up (purchasing supplies)," Bautista told reporters in a press briefing on Wednesday.

Itinerant vendors are also making a killing here with surgical masks, which sell for P10 each.

Bautista said residents have started to self medicate, buying antibiotics that the city government already supplies to some 19,000 market vendors and jeepney drivers. Dayrit had identified the Baguio City public market as a key contamination source for meningococcemia.

Doctors from Mt. Province have consulted Baguio doctors about a possible meningococcemia infection there. *Reports from Vincent Cabreza, Desiree Caluza, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Villamor Visaya Jr., and Leoncio Balbin Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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SPECIAL SESSION

Congress musters quorum but ends up with nothing

By Carlito Pablo

FOR close to one hour, it looked like the special session of Congress called by President Macapagal-Arroyo was not going to happen. When they finally mustered a quorum, the congressmen ended up arguing whether the special session was needed at all.

In the end, they accomplished nothing.

Although members of the House of Representatives reported late for work, a sufficient number turned up to constitute a quorum to allow both chambers of Congress to work on pending tax measures from Jan. 5-7.

One hundred forty-two congressmen answered the roll call which began at 4:53 p.m., about an hour after presiding officer and Deputy Speaker for the Visayas Rep. Raul del Mar (Lakas, Cebu City) banged the gavel opening the session.

A minimum number of 119 out of the 236-strong House is required to constitute a quorum.

There were less than 20 lawmakers on the floor when Del Mar opened the session at 4 p.m.

Over at the Senate, the senators likewise managed a quorum but the 16 who attended the special session got around to discusssing only the Lateral Attrition Bill and only behind closed doors, not on the floor.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said that during the session, which started at 3 p.m., he went around consulting each senator and 'we reached a consensus and agreed to an all senator caucus right after the privilege hour." Translation: They accomplished nothing.

"*Nakakahiya ito kung walang* quorum (It would be a shame if there is no quorum)," and Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo (Lakas, Pampanga), son of the President, was overheard telling friends seated at the gallery while lawmakers were coming into the session hall in trickles.

Presidential brother-in-law Rep. Ignacio Arroyo (Kampi, Negros Occidental) was supposed to have an engagement in his province but showed up at the session.

While there was a quorum, the session was not without a whimper from both the administration and opposition camps.

Administration Rep. Constantino Jaraula (Lakas, Cagayan de Oro City) said President Arroyo's Proclamation No. 752 calling for a special session did not specify what the House was supposed to do during the three-day assembly.

Jaraula noted that while the proclamation said there was a need to attend to revenue measures identified by the Legislative Executive Development Advisory Council, there was no specific list provided to Congress.

A little past 7 p.m., Del Mar adjourned the session. It will resume 4 p.m. today. That is, if there is going to be a quorum. *With a report from Christine Avendaño*

Erap wants to be in HK longer

By Armand N. Nocum

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada, new knees and all, wants to return to the Philippines a day after the country celebrates his removal from office on Jan. 20, 2001 during the second Edsa people power uprising.

Estrada's US-based doctor, Christopher Mow, has written to the Sandiganbayan asking that Estrada be granted a six-day extension beyond the Jan. 15 deadline set by the court for the disgraced leader to return home.

In a Jan. 4 "Letter of Medical Necessity," Mow said that Estrada needs more time to recover from his Dec. 31 "bilateral total knee replacement surgery."

"Judging by the rate of his progress, I estimate that he will need a total of three weeks of recovery and intensive physical therapy before being returned safely to the Philippines, which should be Jan. 21, 2005," the letter said.

Mow said Estrada should resume his "post-operative physical therapy immediately" for six to eight weeks, upon his return to the Philippines, preferably in a place near a hospital.

He said it was in the "patient's best medical interest that he be allowed to stay in a location that is in close proximity to a major medical center for six to eight weeks after his return to ensure that he has access to immediate medical attention should any post-operative complications arise."

AFP to save ₱80M with abolition of 3 J-Staff offices

By Alcuin Papa

THE ARMED Forces is looking to save about P80 million a year by abolishing three more Joint Staff offices, also known as J-Staff offices, at its Camp Aguinaldo headquarters.

In a talk with reporters yesterday, Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, chief of the AFP Public Information Office, identified the three J-Staff offices as the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Military Operations (J7), Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Education and Training (J8) and the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development (J9).

Pascual said the abolition of the three J-Staff offices was ordered by AFP Chief Gen. Efren Abu as part of the military's reform and reorganization campaign.

"The guidance has already been given to our troops. The amount saved with the abolition will add to the operating expenses of our units and contribute to fuel, food and rice subsidies of our troops," Pascual said.

He said the decision to abolish the three offices was made after a two-month study by the AFP technical working group.

Upon his assumption as AFP chief, Abu ordered the abolition of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Comptrollership (J6) after its former head, retired Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, became embroiled in corruption charges.

Last November, the AFP filed charges of violations of Articles of War against Garcia for failing to declare some of his assets in his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth. Garcia is also facing graft charges before the Ombudsman.

Pascual said the abolition of the three J-Staff offices was done to save resources and to check corruption. He explained that some of the functions of the three offices will be absorbed by other existing offices or will be delegated to new offices.

He said the functions of the J9 will go to the AFP Modernization Program Management Office (AFPMPO) under acting chief Maj. Gen. Reynaldo Rivera, former J9 head, which is implementing the AFP's modernization program.

The AFPMPO will be a transitional organization until its fund-generating duties is transferred to the AFP's Resource Management Office under acting chief Maj. Gen. Antonio Rivera, former chief of J6.

Also, the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Communication, Electronics and Information System (J11) has been "redesignated" as J6 while the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Retirees and Reservist Affairs (J10) is now J7.

Pascual said the remaining J-Staff offices would be J1 to J7.

Civil military operations, unit training, and doctrine development functions, which are former functions of J7, have been transferred to J3 (operations) while the individual training functions on both local and foreign aspects have been absorbed by the J1 (personnel).

The basic functions of J8 have been absorbed by J3, which will assist Abu in formulating plans and policies on all matters concerning operations, manpower and the organization, training and employment of AFP resources.

Meanwhile, a top officer and member of the J-staff, who asked not to be named, said the reorganization was causing "some confusion" at the AFP's general headquarters.

He said Abu has yet to feel the effects of the streamlining.

"Of course, there is some adjustment to the new offices which could be normal," the officer said.

Torres; 86

ENGINEER Pedro E. Torres, second vice chair of the board of trustees of the University of Mindanao, died on Monday at the Davao Doctors Hospital. He was 86.

Torres was the third offspring in the brood of 11 of Davao pioneering couple, the late Nicasio Torres and Feliza Echavarria. He was born in Pantukan, Davao Province on Aug. 20, 1918.

He is survived by his wife Antonia Reyes, and children Lamberto and Ruby Palugod; Manuel and Elma Batallones; Ma. Magdalena and Emilio Pugeda; Antonio and Monsie Gonzales; Felizabel and Sonny Ordona; Julieta; and Pedro Nicolio and Daisy Castillo. A daughter, Pinky, wife of Dr. Jose Aliling, succumbed to cancer three years ago.

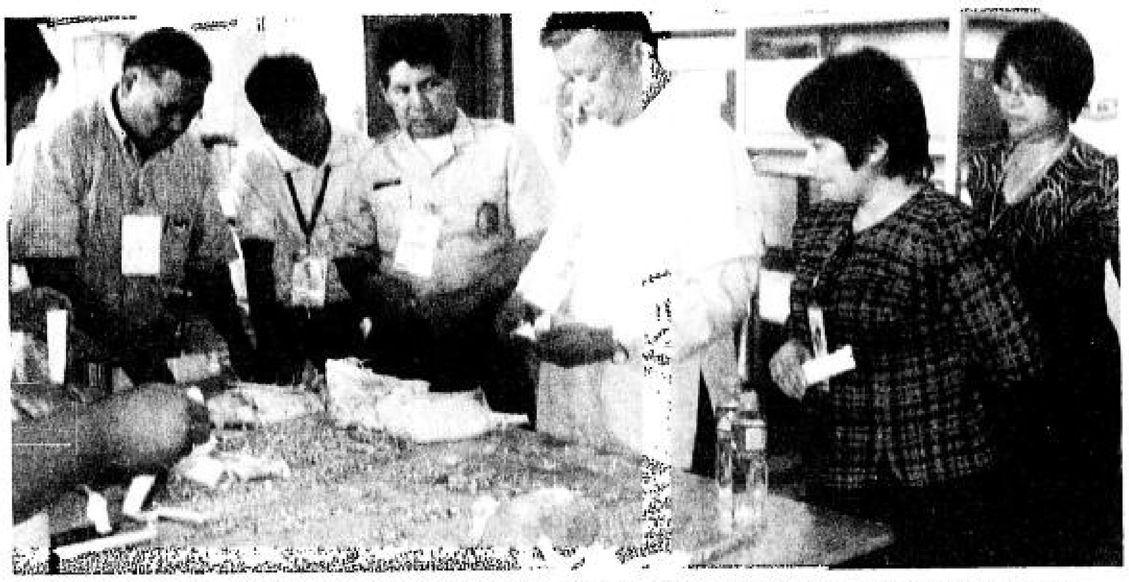
His body lies at the Venice Chapel, Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes in Davao City. Interment will be on Saturday at the Davao Memorial Park, after a concelebrated Mass at the San Pedro Cathedral.

Borlongan; 77

JOSE Z. Borlongan, a civil engineer who was formerly with the Department of Public Works and Highways office in Masbate, died Jan. 2 at the age of 77.

He is survived by wife Nestora; children Marites, Marinet, Marichu, Maridel and Josue; sons- and daughter-in-law; grandchildren; and sisters Aida, Lina and Irene.

The body lies at the St. Anthony of Padua chapel, Barangay Calsada, Tipas, Taguig. Interment will be at the Tipas Catholic Cemetery on Saturday after the 2 p.m. Mass.



SUBIC CATCH: Retired Maj. Gen. Jose Calimlim, chief of the anti-smuggling task force at the Subic Bay Freeport, inspects P15 million worth of smuggled watches and jewelry from Hong Kong.

₱15-M jewelry smuggling foiled in Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—The anti-smuggling task force here seized assorted jewelry worth P15 million that a suspected smuggling syndicate tried to bring into the country from Hong Kong.

Retired Maj. Gen. Jose Calimlim, task force head, said the shipment, which weighed 22 kilograms, was misdeclared as computer parts. It was coursed through the courier Federal Express.

Calimlim said the shipment was contained in two unmarked boxes, which had been consigned to a Subic importer, the Intex Marketing and Sales Corp., and shipped from Hong Kong by the International Logistics Gateway Ltd.

"The P15 million estimate is very conservative, considering that the pieces are very expensive brand watches and a lot of the fine jewelry were studded with diamonds and other gem stones," said Marietta Zamoranos, Subic customs collector.

Calimlim said the two packages caught the attention of task force agents because these did not have usual markings or descriptions such as country of origin, net or gross weight, or even the supplier or shipper.

Zamoranos said it would take her examiners about five hours to inventory the shipment, consisting mostly of Fendi and Bulgari brand ladies watches, bracelets, diamond-studded earrings and rings, and watch accessories and parts. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Union blames Journal execs for money mess

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE LABOR union of the Philippine Journalists Inc. yesterday asked Malacañang to investigate the former key officers of the company for alleged financial mismanagement that led to losses of at least P35 million.

The Journal Employees Union said in a statement that it was considering filing charges against former chair Arturo "Bobby" dela Cruz and former officers Roberto Capco, Ceferino Arellano and Ruby Bruno for the alleged irregularities.

Allegations of financial irregularities against the four came up when new management took over from Malacañang appointees following a decision by the Supreme Court ordering the return of PJI to its former owners last month.

The union claimed they learned from the new management that the employees retirement fund was missing and that their monthly contributions for the Social Security System, Pag-Ibig, Philhealth and insurance had not been remitted since June although these had been deducted from their salaries.

However, Dela Cruz denied any irregularities, saying the publishing company had been losing money for years.

"I can look anybody in the eye. We did not touch those accounts. I have nothing to hide," Dela Cruz said.

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Thank you for being a good neighbor.

From December 7,2004 to January 4, 2005, **Operation Sagip Buhay** was able to give 26,947 family food packs estimated at least P6.7M to 10,874 families in the 35 affected barangays in Infanta, Quezon. Twenty eight barangays are on the third round of food assistance. Food relief distribution is ongoing to date. Over 2,150 families benefited from medical assistance, and 60 persons were given anti-tetanus injection. .

Operation Sagip Buhay would like to thank as well the volunteers from Assumption San Lorenzo, Don Bosco Mandaluyong, La Concordia College, Sta Catalina College, Villamor High School, Pamantasan ng Makati, Hands On Manila Foundation, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PETA, Franciscan Sisters, Junior Oblate Seminarians, Sisters of the Poor and many more.

Special thanks to the people behind St Mark's Relief Coordinating Council coordinated by Infanta Integrated Community Development Assistance Inc (ICDAI) together with the Parish of Infanta and Mt. Carmel School for their selfless dedication and service.

May God reward each one of you for your generosity and solidarity with the victims of disaster.

Let us continue to pray and help displaced peoples wherever they are including our South Asian brothers and sisters devastated by the tsunamis.

It is in the worst of times that genuine human compassion comes out in all persons of goodwill.

PHOTO BY REM ZAMORA

For making this possible and more, we are grateful to the following partners and friends of the Sagip Buhay Infanta Network who generously cotributed cash (PhP4M), relief goods, human resource, and logistical support:

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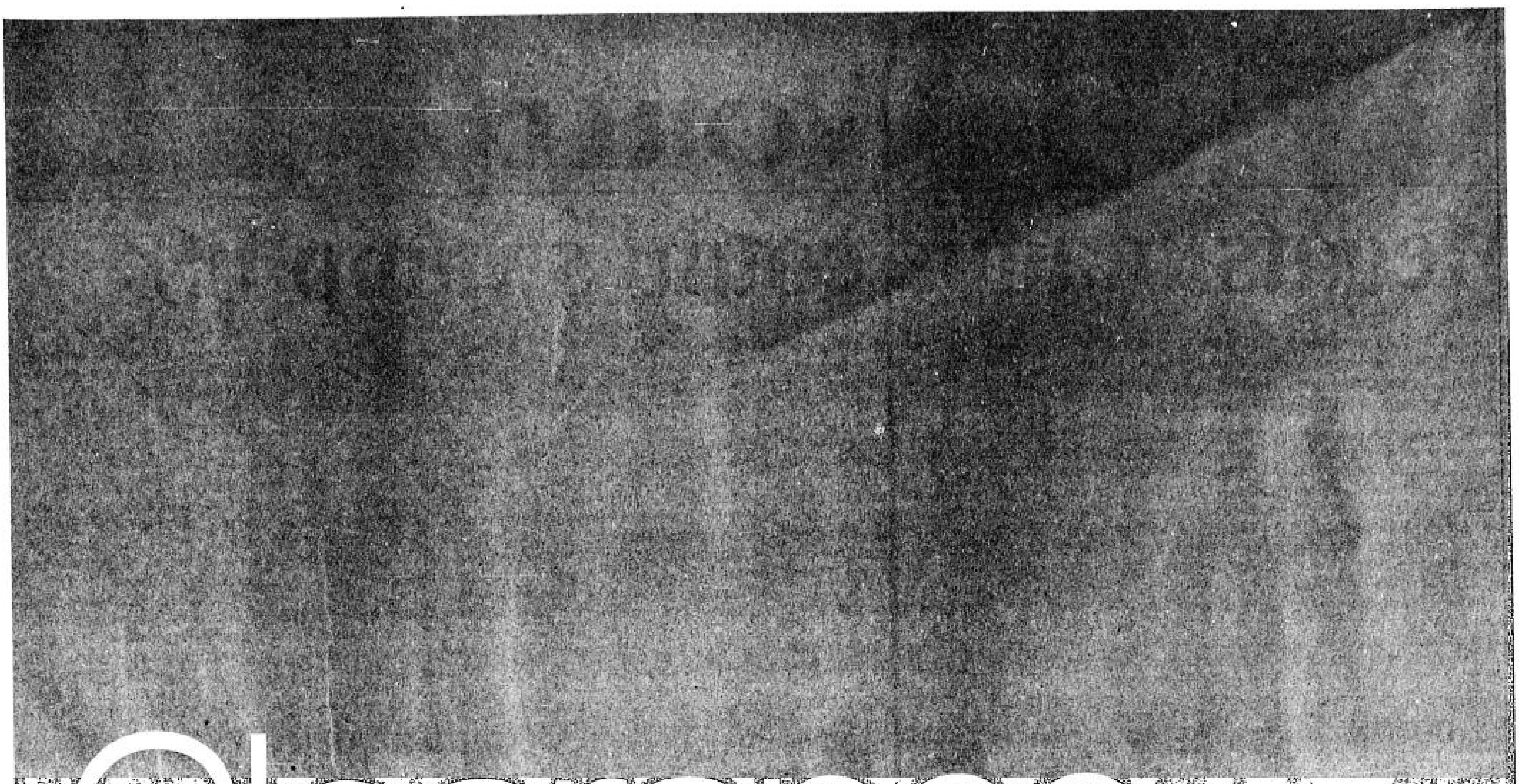

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Megatsunamis could swamp US

MADRID—A wall of water up to 50 meters high crashing into the Atlantic seaboard of the United States, flattening everything in its path—not a Hollywood movie but a dire prophecy by some British and US academics.

As the international community struggles to aid victims of last month's devastating tsunami in southern Asia, scientists warn an eruption of a volcano in Spain's Canary Islands could unleash a "mega-tsunami" larger than any in recorded history.

According to their controversial study, an explosion of the Cumbre Vieja volcano on the island of La Palma could send a chunk of rock twice the size of the Isle of Wight into the Atlantic at up to 350 km an hour.

Many experts believe the risk of "mega-tsunamis" from such a massive landslide on La Palma has been hugely overstated.

But in the study's scenario, energy released would equal the electricity consumption of the United States for six months, sending gigantic tidal waves across the Atlantic at the speed of a jet plane.

Devastation in the United States would reach trillions of dollars with tens of millions of lives at risk. Spain, Portugal, Britain, France, Brazil, the Caribbean and West Africa would also be swamped by giant waves.

"It may occur in the next eruption, which could be next year, or... it may be 10 eruptions down the line," said Bill McGuire of Britain's Benfield Hazard Research Center.

Cumbre Vieja, which last exploded in 1971, typically erupts at intervals of between 20 and 200 years.

"We just don't know when it will happen, but are people prepared to take the risk after the Indian Ocean events?" McGuire said, calling for a program to monitor the slide in Cumbre Vieja's flank.

"We need to get people out in advance of the collapse itself. Once the collapse has happened, the Caribbean would have 9 hours, the US 6 to 12 hours to evacuate tens of millions of people," he said.

Other experts say such predictions about La Palma or the Hawaiian volcano of Kilauea are grossly exaggerated.

The Tsunami Society, an international association of experts, dismisses such theories as "scaremongering." It argues Cumbre Vieja would not collapse in a single block and the wave generated would be much smaller.

"We are talking about thousands of years in the future.

Anything could happen. An asteroid could also fall on earth," George Pararas-Carayannis, founder of the Tsunami Society, said.

Many wave experts believe tsunami from abrupt landslides dissipate more quickly than those generated by powerful earthquakes, like the Dec. 26 quake off Indonesia which stretched thousands of miles along the ocean floor.

Charles Mader, editor of the Science of Tsunami Hazards journal and an expert on wave modeling, predicts that even in the event of a massive landslide on La Palma the tsunami reaching North America would be no more than 1 meter high.

But McGuire stands by the wave modeling for the La Palma tsunami, carried out by Steven Ward of the University of California.

As the world reels from the Indian Ocean disaster, which killed more than 150,000 people, oceanographers and geologists agree the threat of tsunamis has been underestimated.

"It would not surprise me at all if tomorrow we saw another tsunami like this," said Pararas-Carayannis, pointing to faults off Portugal, Puerto Rico and Peru as possible risks. *Reuters*

Car bomb kills 13 in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A suicide car bomber killed at least 13 people at an Iraqi police academy on Wednesday, but Prime Minister Iyad Allawi vowed to stick to his timetable for a Jan. 30 election despite escalating attacks.

The bomber barreled his way into a compound in the town of Hilla, south of Baghdad in a lawless area known as the "Triangle of Death," and blew up his explosives-filled vehicle after coming under heavy fire, police spokesperson Hadi Hatif said.

The attack was the latest by insurgents targeting Iraq's US-backed interim government and its fledgling security services in a bloody campaign to sabotage the election.

It came a day after gunmen assassinated Baghdad's provincial governor and a suicide truck bomber killed 11 people outside a police commando headquarters in a surge of violence that drew fresh calls for delaying the national ballot.

"The government is committed to running the elections on schedule," Allawi told a news conference in the Green Zone, home to the Iraqi government and the US and British embassies.

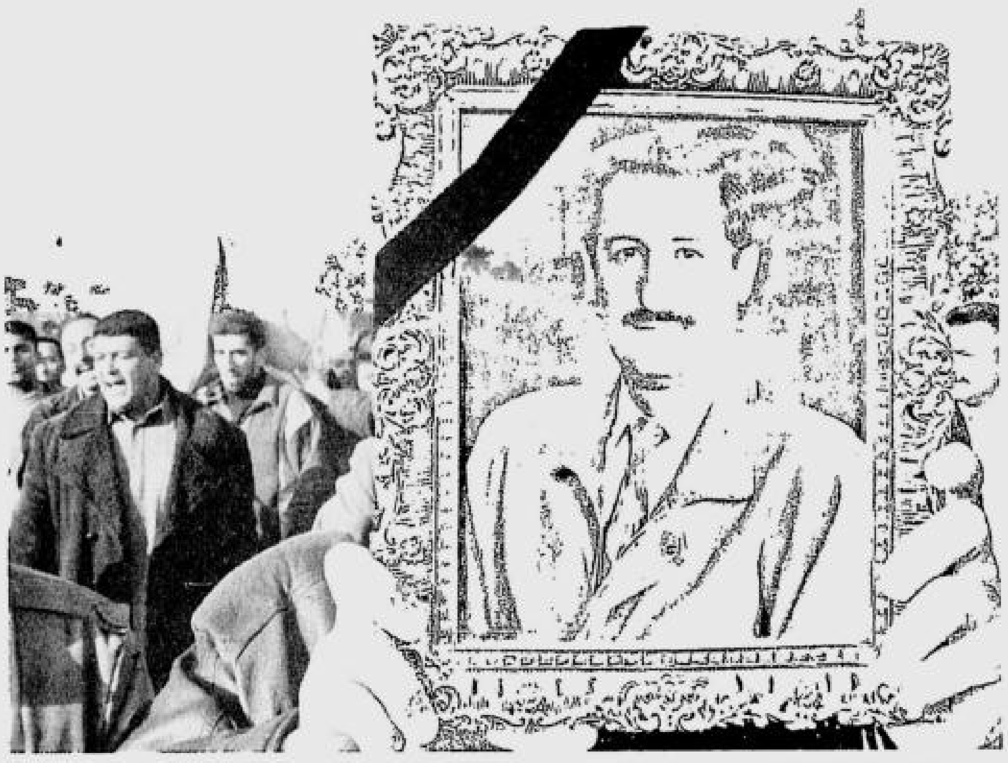
But even as Allawi made his pledge, attacks continued unabated.

A hospital official in Hilla, about 100 km from Baghdad, said at least 13 people were killed and 25 wounded in bombing at the academy, which had been due to hold a graduation ceremony.

Hours earlier, a car bomb targeting a US military convoy killed two Iraqi bystanders in western Baghdad, police said.

In the volatile northern city of Mosul, a leading Sunni politician was found shot dead a day after he was kidnapped from his pharmacy.

His Iraqi Islamic Party had pulled out of the election, fearing persistent bloodshed would deter Iraqis in the Sunni north and west from voting, skewing the outcome. *Reuters*



AN IRAQI mourner holds up a portrait of the assassinated governor of Baghdad, Ali al-Haidri, while marching during his funeral in the streets of Baghdad Jan. 5. REUTERS

Iraq president urges poll date review

BAGHDAD—Iraq's president urged the United Nations on Tuesday to look into whether the country should go ahead with its scheduled Jan. 30 election despite violence threatening to scare voters away from the polls.

"Definitely the United Nations, as an independent umbrella of legitimacy... should really take the responsibility by seeing whether that (timing) is possible or not," Ghazi al-Yawar said in an interview.

The United Nations said it was up to Iraq's Independent Electoral Commission to decide. No official request had been received from Yawar, said UN spokesperson Marie Okabe.

Iraq's interim government and its American allies have repeatedly said that the vote would not be delayed. But Yawar said the polls would fail if a raging insurgency kept a significant number of Sunnis away from voting stations.

"Definitely the United Nations, the party who is independent, who cannot be threatened or intimidated and who is credible in the international community, should really stand up for their responsibilities and obligations by saying whether that is possible or not," he said.

"On a logical basis, there are signs that it will be a tough call to hold the election," said Yawar, a Sunni who has formed his own election list.

A senior US state department official told reporters at the Pentagon from Baghdad: "I think absolutely the elections are going to be held on Jan. 30."

Insurgents have been targeting leading politicians, election workers and Iraqi security forces ahead of the polls.

Yawar said that some members of Iraq's interim government believe the polls should be delayed but did not have the authority to press for a new timetable.

"For the executive branch of the government to come and call for a delay in the elections, people will start thinking that we are enjoying these positions right now and we just want to stay here," said Yawar.

Iraq's temporary constitution, endorsed by the United Nations, calls for elections to be held by end-January. Iraq's Electoral Commission says changing the date is a political decision that would require wide consultation.

Iraq's minority Sunni Muslims fear violence will keep them away from voting while majority Shiites, long oppressed under Saddam Hussein, are poised to gain power.

"Definitely if a big chunk of the Iraqi population is deprived of participating in elections it will not result in very successful elections," Yawar said. *Reuters*

Central African nations: Where's the relief for us?

WASHINGTON—The skies over Asia are being darkened these days by an abundance of relief-bearing cargo planes, reflecting the huge outpouring of international sympathy and support in response to the tsunami crisis.

But in eastern Congo and other regions of Africa afflicted by humanitarian hardship, people might reasonably ask, "How about some relief for us?"

The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is widely viewed as the world's deadliest.

A study released Dec. 9 by the New York-based International Rescue Committee reports that 3.8 million people in eastern Congo have died since 1998 and that about 31,000 continue to die monthly as a result of continuing conflict.

However tragic the fallout from the Indian Ocean tsunami may be, the number of victims will not be comparable to those in Central Africa. As of Tuesday, the tsunami death toll was about 150,000.

Led by a $500 million commitment from Japan, some $2 billion has been pledged thus far for the tsunami's victims. According to the IRC study, international humanitarian aid for Congo was $188 million—$3.23 per person —2004.

The US Agency for International Development spent $54 million on Congo in fiscal 2004. The request for 2005 is $32 million. The $19 million decline mostly reflects an elimination of food aid.

In contrast, the US government has pledged $350 million thus far for the tsunami tragedy.

Dr. Richard Brennan, an IRC specialist on Congo, said Tuesday: "I've been impressed with the outpouring of solidarity for victims of the tsunami. I'm baffled as to why there isn't a similar level of solidarity or concern for the people of the Congo."

Brennan was reached by telephone in Indonesia, where he is doing tsunami relief work.

Much of the instability in eastern Congo stems from the presence of thousands of Rwandan Hutu rebels who took part in the genocide against Rwandan Tutsis in 1994. The region is rife with cross-border and ethnic tensions. About 11,000 UN peacekeepers are deployed there.

The mortality data for the IRC study was collected between January 2003 and April 2004. It found that 1,000 people a day died in excess of normal mortality. Almost half were children under 5 killed by disease and malnutrition—an outgrowth of a destroyed health care system.

There are obvious differences between the eastern Congo's misery and that of the tsunami's target area. The latter is generally at peace while the Congo remains riven with conflict, impeding humanitarian assistance.

David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, a Christian pro-development group, says Congo is getting short shrift.

"The world is not overreacting to the tsunami but is underreacting to misery in other places," he said, citing Congo as an example.

He added that the slower-paced accumulation of victims in Central Africa, compared with the Indian Ocean rim, has meant less international attention—and less humanitarian aid.

Beckmann also believes that race is also working against the Congolese. "We've managed to callous ourselves to the idea that millions of Africans are dying," he said. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Anthrax scare at NY building

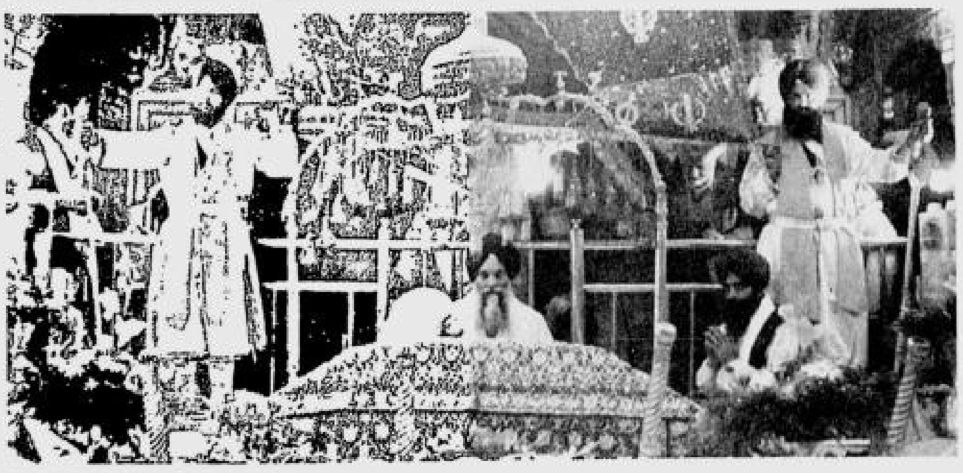
NEW YORK—Firefighters and police were called to investigate a suspicious white powder in a package at a building housing the offices of The Economist magazine in New York on Tuesday, officials said. A fire department spokesperson said it was too early to say what the powder might be, though it was being treated as a potentially hazardous material. "It's a hazmat (hazardous material) incident," the spokesperson said. Another fire department official contacted later said three people had received medical attention on the scene but they did not require hospital treatment. "They were a bit overwhelmed," the official said. A police spokesperson said a package was found containing an unknown white powder and authorities had sent it to the health department for tests. He added that similar alerts were a frequent occurrence since a spate of anthrax alerts after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. *Reuters*

New anticancer drug

FRANKFURT—German and Swiss drug makers Schering and Novartis are developing a new anticancer drug with annual sales potential of up to $2.7 billion, Schering chief Hubertus Erlen said in a newspaper interview published Wednesday. "For us and for our cooperation partner Novartis, it could represent sales potential of one billion euros apiece," Erlen told the daily Die Welt. The substance, PTK/ZK, cuts off blood flow to tumors, stopping their growth. It is in the final phase of clinical trials, he said. "If we can show that this technology is successful in intestinal cancer, there is the possibility that it could also be used to treat other types of cancer," Erlen said. *AFP*

Most durable condoms

WASHINGTON—The consumers group best known for rating cars and washing machines has turned its testing prowess to condoms to find out which ones measure up best and how other birth control methods compare. The nonprofit Consumers Union says in a new guide to contraception that the seven top US types of condom they studied did not burst despite vigorous testing, and all models met international standards. But results showed that the top brand, able to take the most punishment, was the Durex Extra Sensitive Lubricated Latex, according to the report. Other top-performers include the Durex Performax Lubricated, Lifestyles Classic Collection Ultra Sensitive Lubricated and TheyFit Lubricated. A melon-colored model distributed by Planned Parenthood performed the worst, bursting during a test in which the latex condoms were filled with air. The group says its review of contraceptives was not politically motivated, although there is an intense debate among health professionals and advocacy groups about the focus on abstinence-only education by the Bush administration. Consumers Union uses standardized tests to rate the products it examines, which for latex condoms involves filling them with air. There is no accepted method to test silicon or non-latex condoms. *Reuters*



SIKH ANNIVERSARY

Indian Sikh priest Gurbachan Singh (center) sits behind the Sikh Holy Book Book, The Guru Granth Sahib, during a ceremony to mark the 339th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh at the Golden Temple in Amritsar Jan. 5. Guru Gobind Singh was the 10th Sikh Master and lived from 1666-1708. AFP

Court upholds indictment of Pinochet

SANTIAGO—Chile's Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld Augusto Pinochet's indictment on murder and kidnapping charges, bringing the former dictator closer to standing trial for the first time for abuses during his 1973-1990 rule.

The three-to-two vote upholds a lower court ruling rejecting a defense the claim that Pinochet is mentally unfit to stand trial, and upholds Pinochet's house arrest.

The charges—one murder and nine kidnappings of people whose bodies were never found—are related to Operation Condor, a 1970s conspiracy of South American dictatorships to collaborate in eliminating opponents.

Pinochet, 89, has never stood trial for the disappearance and presumed murder of some 3,000 political opponents who vanished during his dictatorship, according to official count.

Families of those who disappeared erupted into shouts of joy as court clerk Carlos Meneses announced the ruling.

"We are very pleased with this decision, since we have been waiting 30 years for news about the fate of our loved ones," said Lorena Pizarro, president of a victims' group. *AFP*

Egypt made nuke material, diplomats say

VIENNA—Egyptian scientists made small quantities of uranium compounds that could be used to make nuclear weapons—in one case maybe as recently as a year ago, diplomats said Tuesday, citing evidence gathered by the UN atomic watchdog agency.

The Egyptian government strongly denied Egypt was interested in making nuclear weapons.

The diplomats said most of the work was carried out in the 1980s and 1990s, but said the UN monitor—the International Atomic Energy Agency—was also looking at evidence that suggests at least one of the experiments ended in early 2004.

Specifically, said one of the diplomats, the Egyptians "tried to produce various components of uranium" without declaring it to the IAEA, as they were bound to under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Among the products were several kilograms of uranium metal and of uranium tetrafluoride—a precursor to uranium hexafluoride gas, said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

In Cairo, a government spokesperson denied interest in nuclear weapons, but did not specifically challenge the claims surfacing Tuesday. *AP*

Abbas slams attacks on Palestinians in Gaza

ABBAS

BEIT LAHIYA, Gaza Strip—Israeli troops killed eight Palestinians as they intensified a campaign against rocket attacks Tuesday, prompting a furious denunciation of the "Zionist enemy" by presidential election favorite Mahmud Abbas.

An 11-year-old boy and five teenagers were among seven people killed when troops fired tank shells at a farmhouse in the Beit Lahiya area of northern Gaza from where Palestinian militants have frequently fired mortars and rockets into southern Israel, witnesses and security sources said.

Body parts could be seen lodged in the wreckage of greenhouses and nearby strawberry patches.

"I saw some masked people setting up the rocket stand and firing, and then a tank came out of Nissanit (a nearby Jewish settlement) and began shelling," said local resident Rida Abu Banat.

"I saw body parts flying everywhere—hands, legs, heads. I went down immediately to try and help the injured people before the ambulances came. The ground was soaked in blood."

The tanks opened fire shortly after a number of mortar rounds were fired toward the Erez border crossing between Gaza and Israel, wounding one Israeli.

"Four mortars were fired, three against the Erez industrial zone, one near a school bus," said army spokesperson Captain Yishai David.

"We will not tolerate of this kind of shooting against civilians. No country in the world would tolerate this kind of activity."

Sources at the Kamal Edwane hospital, where most of the dead and wounded were evacuated, said one of the victims was an 11-year-old, three were aged 16 and two 17. The identity of the seventh was not clear.

David insisted that the shelling had targeted the militants who fired mortar rounds on the Erez crossing.

"The soldiers spotted a gang of six to eight terrorists and shot at them," he said.

Separately, a 24-year-old Palestinian was killed and five wounded when they were caught in a shootout between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen east of Gaza City, medical sources said.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has given the Army free rein to put an end to rocket attacks in the Gaza Strip where Jewish settlers are frequently targeted. *AFP*

Bird flu claims 1st 2005 victim

HANOI—Bird flu has killed a 9-year-old boy in Vietnam, a health official said on Wednesday, marking the first reported death in 2005 from a virus that killed more than 30 people last year and ravaged the poultry industry as it swept across Asia.

The death comes a week after the World Health Organization warned Vietnam may face new bird flu outbreaks this month, as poultry is transported around the country ahead of the Lunar New Year celebrations in early February.

In response to the threat, Vietnam has culled 4,000 poultry so far this year and officials in Ho Chi Minh City had tightened inspection, state-run Voice of Vietnam radio said.

The latest cull brought to 24,000 the number of poultry slaughtered since early December across eight provinces, six of them in the Mekong Delta, where the epidemic broke out in late 2003 before spreading across the country and wiping out 17 percent of Vietnam's poultry stock.

Preliminary tests by health officials from Ho Chi Minh City showed the H5N1 bird flu virus killed the boy on Tuesday night in the Mekong Delta pro-vince of Tra Vinh, said Luong Van Minh, deputy director of the provincial hospital.

Further tests were being conducted, he added. Tra Vinh is one of the eight provinces which reported the recurrence of bird flu.

The boy was the country's 30th bird flu patient, and the 21st to die. Bird flu also caused 12 deaths in Thailand last year, and cases were reported across Southeast Asia and China.

Minh said the latest victim was admitted to the hospital at the weekend along with a 14-year-old boy, who has since been transferred to a Ho Chi Minh City hospital.

Both children were suspected to have contracted bird flu, but sample tests of the 14-year-old, who remains in hospital, showed he was not infected, doctors said. *Reuters*

Peru hostages crisis finally ends

ANDAHUAYLAS, Peru—A four-day standoff with ultra-nationalist rebels holding 17 hostages at a police station here ended with the surrender of the armed group, President Alejandro Toledo said, adding that six people were killed during the unrest.

"Law and order has been fully restored to Adahuaylas," Toledo said late Tuesday in Lima, 400 km northeast of this Andean town of 30,000 that was placed under curfew Monday night pending a military attack on the police station that proved unnecessary.

"The fascist and terrorist attack has been defeated," Toledo said in television address. "Our democracy has defended itself with prudence and responsibility" and the six people killed during the standoff—four police officers, a rebel and a demonstrator—"died defending the homeland."

Military officials said the 17 soldiers and policemen held hostage were released unharmed as dozens of insurgents laid down their weapons and walked out of the police station they had seized on Saturday.

Local media said the renegade former soldiers wore military uniforms, flashed V-for-victory signs and hailed their leader, Antauro Humala, 41.

About 300 people gathered outside the police station to demonstrate their support for the insurgents.

The surrender followed another shootout between security forces and rebel sympathizers on a nearby hill, local media said.

It also came shortly after authorities said they had held new talks with the insurgents, hours after capturing Humala as he engaged in negotiations overnight Monday.

Humala's group seized the town's main police station as part of what they had hoped would be a wider uprising against Toledo, whom they accuse of corruption and of selling out to foreign interests.

The rebels had said on several occasions they were willing to surrender, but insisted they wanted guarantees that security forces would not open fire on them.

Four police officers were killed when more than 300 security forces tried to storm rebel positions on Sunday. One rebel was killed by a sharpshooter on Monday, and a rebel supporter shot during a separate firefight Monday with army troops died on Tuesday. Another 14 people were wounded during the siege.

Stones, logs and burned tires strewn about the streets around the police station are the remaining testimony to the tension that gripped this town of 30,000 over four days. Toledo on Sunday declared a regional state of emergency in Apurimac state and vowed "a firm hand" to quell the revolt.

Initially, the rebels holding the police station were said to number 150, but they indicated there were only 50 of them in the building on Tuesday. Another group of insurgents was arrested along with Humala during the negotiations. The final rebel count was around 100.

Most of the former soldiers served in the 1995 war with Ecuador and the battle against Shining Path Maoist rebels in the 1980s and 1990s.

Their group is named "Etnocacerista Movement," after Avelino Caceres, who led a campaign of resistance against the Chilean occupation and is considered a hero of the 1879-1883 War of the Pacific.

The group seeks to rebuild Peru on the foundations of the ancient Incan empire, staunchly rejects any ties with neighboring Chile and generally opposes foreign influences.

Humala has said "traitors"—among them the top military brass—should face a firing squad. *AFP*

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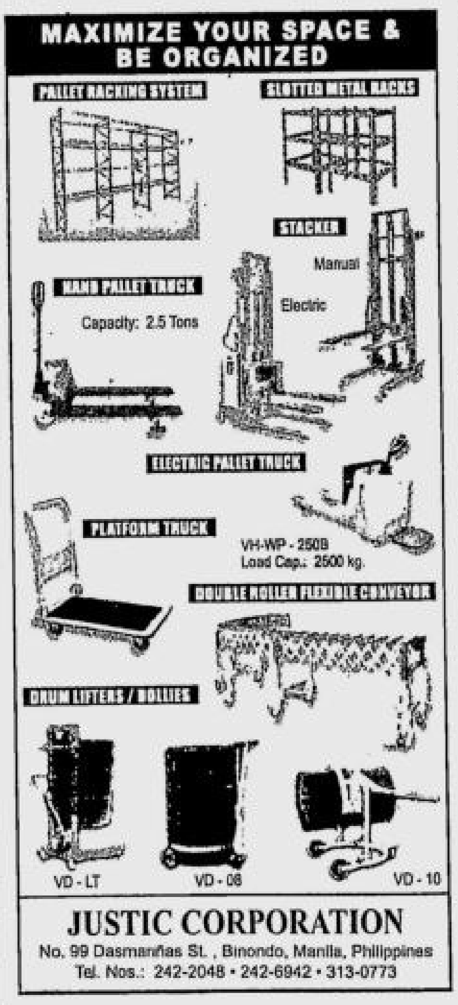
IMPORTANT
To the Devotees of the SACRED HEART OF JESUS, Tomorrow, January 7,2005, will be the FIRST FRIDAY of the month. Novenas to the SACRED HEART OF JESUS and to ST.ANTHONY are given away FREE. Please get them from Jasmine at the Santuario de San Antonio,Forbes Park,Makati or from Beny at 170 Salcedo St. Legaspi Village, Makati.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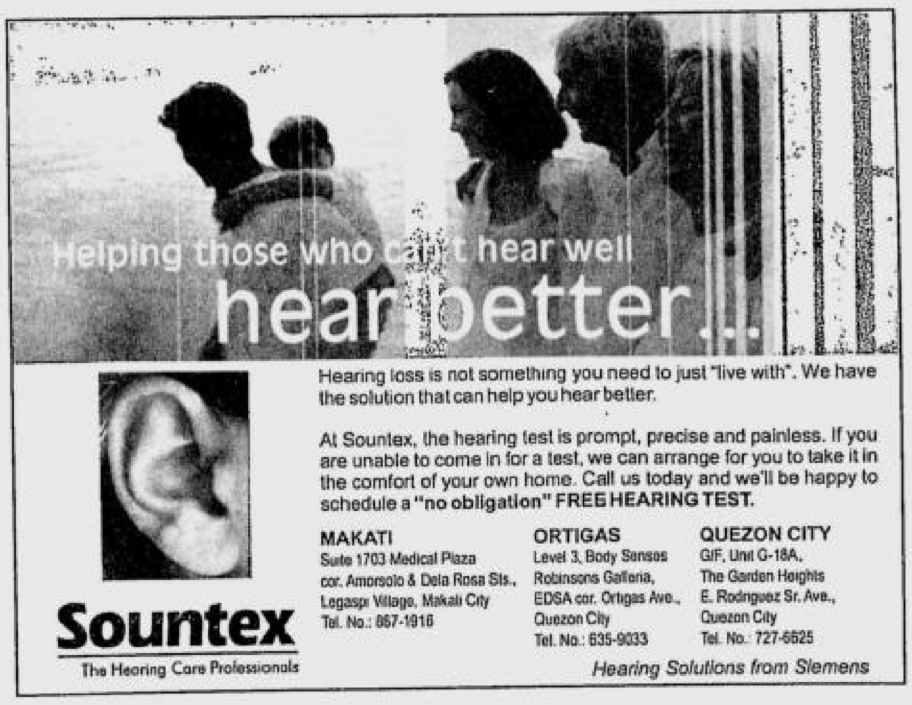
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Correction

THE CAPTION of the photo accompanying the story "GMA angered by Mansion graft report, dismisses 2 caretakers," that appeared in the Across the Nation, Page A16, yesterday, wrongly identified the structure in the background as the presidential Mansion. It is the house of the Arroyo family on Leonard Wood Road in Baguio City. The two photographs that appeared on that page were taken by EV Espiritu, not Toots Soberano.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph. Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Raul Palabrica, readers' advocate, the same address and fax numbers as those of the city editor, and e-mail address:rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph.

Republic of the Philippines
CITY OF CALOOCAN

Dear Caloocan City Taxpayers,

We appeal for your kind understanding and cooperation. Help me reform Caloocan City.

ATTY. ENRICO "RECOM" ECHIVERRI
City Mayor

OFFICE OF THE CITY TREASURER

NOTICE OF DELINQUENCY IN THE PAYMENT OF THE REAL PROPERTY TAX

In compliance with Section 254 of R.A. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, the undersigned hereby certifies that the following properties are delinquent in the payment of real property taxes, to wit:

STATEMENT OF TAX DELINQUENCY

TAXPAYER	ADDRESS	PIN	YEAR COVERED	TOTAL
Alliance Marketing Corp.	422 Talon I, Las Piñas City	113-10-083-04-033	1995-2004	P 1,026,805.20
Arayaland Mfg. Corp.	60 P. Florentino St. Quezon City	113-22-165-14-096-B002	1995-2004	12,897,000.98
Baello, Oscar	A. Mabini St., Caloocan City	113-08-075-05-051	1974-2004	2,891,063.68
Battungco, Vicente	180 8th Ave. Gaino St., Caloocan City	113-15-102-01-006-B001	1990-2004	1,383,379.15
Brown, Eugenio	335 Libis Espina St., Poblacion, Caloocan City	113-02-016-99-001	1994-2004	1,698,682.39
C L T Realty Dev. Corp.	5th Flr. LTA Bldg., Legaspi Village, Makati City	113-19-161-01-002	1998-2004	13,851,921.63
Calderon, Ignacio	Damong Malit St., Caloocan City	113-23-167-47-068	1980-2004	1,895,929.93
Calderon, Rolando B.	1196 G. Apacible St. Ermita, Manila	113-26-177-52-023	1994-2004	1,799,633.60
Caloocan Tourist Dev. Corp.	3 Cor Don Vicente Ang St. & Old Samson Rd., Caloocan City	113-18-138-04-020-M010	1995-2004	350,474.42
Carriedo, Leonor	PO BOX 1336, Manila	113-18-145-01-156	1994-2004	3,009,643.10
Cayco, Eliza E.	Israel St., Malabon City	113-01-008-01-042	1994-2004	9,652,795.84
Continental Enterprises Inc.	1439 San Andres Bukid, Manila	113-26-175-04-029	1994-2004	4,899,870.32
Co. Lim	107 Gen. Tirona St., Bagong Barrio, Caloocan City	113-18-138-04-018-B003	1982-2004	1,120,284.60
D M Consortium Inc.	1313-D Munoz, Tandang Sora, Quezon City	113-08-073-01-002	1996-2004	13,269,801.48
De Guzman, Nicolas	4 Greek Tech. St., University Hills Subd., Caloocan City	113-05-040-04-005-B001	1994-2004	1,526,368.27
Dela Cruz, Ofelia	Kaybiga, Caloocan City	113-21-166-03-059	1989-2004	1,491,702.81
Dela Pena, Conchita	Pura, Tarlac City	113-28-180-25-020	1990-2004	1,558,406.88
Delos Reyes, Baldomera	Bagbaguin, Caloocan City	113-22-165-26-071	1994-2004	8,283,862.51
Dionisio, Adela Vda De	69 Gen. Luna St., Sangandaan, Caloocan City	113-01-005-02-066	1981-2004	1,087,558.08
Domingo, Maria	36 11th Rizal Ave., Ext. Grace Park, Caloocan City	113-24-168-22-001	1994-2004	2,238,213.60
Espiritu, Pedro c/o Florentino Lopez	L292-A. Sunriser Subd., Caloocan City	113-23-167-99-050	1974-2004	2,348,026.28
Estanislao, Felicidad	Sta. Quiteria, Caloocan City	113-19-162-02-186	1994-2004	1,116,242.80
Evasco Joseph & Joel	1139 Benavidez St., Tondo, Manila	113-19-161-03-018-B001	1993-2004	1,646,150.42
Ever Emporium Inc.	1962 Claro M. Recto Ave., Manila	113-25-171-68-140	1993-2004	1,437,397.99
Florencio, Mario	Palasan, Polo, Bulacan	113-22-165-22-094	1994-2004	1,325,710.54
Golden Rich Warehousing Inc.	108 Gen. Mascardo St., Caloocan City	113-18-136-03-011-B001	1988-2004	1,301,002.59
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030	1989-2004	65,492,399.23
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-B001	1997-2004	129,379,119.90
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-B002	1992-2004	157,150,370.35
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-M010	2003-2004	312,504.74
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-M014	2002-2004	1,119,225.60
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-M016	2002-2004	1,328,356.00
Gotesco Investments Inc	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-M017	2003-2004	174,270.10
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-M018	2003-2004	885,880.80
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-M019	2001-2004	408,718.75
Gotesco Investments Inc.	1960 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-11-088-01-030-M020	2003-2004	10,311.84
Gravador, Godofredo	Unit 17 Panan Comm Complex, Diliman, Quezon City	113-28-176-51-168-B001	1999-2004	2,864,852.36
Gubat sa Ciudad Resort	Cloverleaf Market, Balintawak, Quezon City	113-25-171-20-001-B012	1988-2004	1,828,963.94
Gue Con Mfg Corp	7 Pacifico St., Cruz Subd., Baesa, Caloocan City	113-13-113-01-003-B003	1995-2004	6,784,050.90
Hao, Benito	790 Bagbaguin Street, Caloocan City	113-18-134-03-030-B002	1985-2004	3,109,122.39
Hechanova , Teresa	Kaybiga, Caloocan City	113-23-167-53-004-B001	1984-2004	1,187,580.07
Herrera, Felicisima B.	146 Arellano St., Caloocan City	113-23-167-90-092	1995-2004	1,929,635.79
Herrera, Felicisima B.	146 Arellano St., Caloocan City	113-23-167-90-093	1989-2004	1,752,055.93
High Steel Product Inc.	290 7th Ave., Lady of Grace, Caloocan City	113-12-104-05-022-M002	1994-2004	5,455,929.60
Isla Communications Co. Inc.	2nd Flr. Trafralgar Plaza, Salcedo Vill., Makati City	113-11-086-02-026-M002	1996-2004	2,421,484.66
Jacobo, Teofilo	Meycauayan, Bulacan	113-26-174-31-095	1979-2004	1,538,611.21
Jacobo, Teofilo	Meycauayan, Bulacan	113-26-174-31-101	1979-2004	7,814,259.79
Jacobo, Teofilo	Meycauayan, Bulacan	113-26-174-31-099	1994-2004	1,740,102.39
Jacobo Teofilo	Meycauayan, Bulacan	113-26-177-01-226	1979-2004	11,111,017.95
Jelly Industrial Corp	197 P. Sevilla St., Caloocan City	113-06-047-01-007-M001	1994-2004	3,424,621.46
Lerma Inc. c/o Carlos Lerma	97 Roosevelt Ave., SFDM, Quezon City	113-04-034-03-001	1979-2004	3,384,143.76
Li Sun Yee	82 Banawe St., Quezon City	113-08-076-01-013	1992-2004	1,144,072.83
Li Sun Yee	82 Banawe St., Quezon City	113-08-076-01-012	1992-2004	2,215,345.92
Lightrail Transit Authority	LRTA Adm. Bldg., Aurora Blvd., Pasay City	113-11-088-06-001-B001	1986-2004	130,033,968.44
Lightrail Transit Authority	LRTA Adm. Bldg., Aurora Blvd., Pasay City	113-11-088-06-001-M002	1992-2004	2,214,058.17
Lightrail Transit Authority	LRTA Adm. Bldg., Aurora Blvd., Pasay City	113-11-088-06-001-M003	1998-2004	41,499,282.76
Lightrail Transit Authority	LRTA Adm. Bldg., Aurora Blvd., Pasay City	113-11-088-06-001-M004	1992-2004	119,709,507.86
Lim, Benito	34 Dancalan St., Quezon City	113-22-165-99-108-B001	1995-2004	2,016,938.88
Lim, Benjamin T	41 5th St., Grace Park, Caloocan City	113-13-112-02-009-B006	1995-2004	1,069,145.67
Macro Metallurgical Engr. Corp	52 Times St., Quezon City	113-23-167-23-021-B001	1991-2004	1,117,694.71
Malabon Candy Co. Inc	C. Cordero St. 5th Avenue, Caloocan City	113-06-051-01-009-M001	1997-2004	1,418,490.95
Manila Press Inc.	492 Nueva St. Binondo Manila	113-18-136-03-013-B001	1990-2004	2,572,419.84
Manly Corp	1843 Claro M. Recto, Manila	113-08-076-01-012-B001	2000-2004	2,730,036.67
Marcaida, Enrique	621 A. Legarda St. Sampaloc, Manila	113-27-179-99-002	1979-2004	1,216,395.48
Martinez, Juanita	818 Ilaya St. Tondo, Manila	113-08-076-01-011-B001	1974-2004	1,041,380.75
Metro Plastic Product	32 M.H. del Pilar St., Bagong Silang Caloocan City	113-13-119-02-005-M002	1994-2004	2,565,449.62
Oversea Warp Knitting Inc.	Bagbaguin, Caloocan City	113-22-165-17-063	1994-2004	1,172,628.00
Oversea Warp Knitting Inc	Bagbaguin, Caloocan City	113-22-165-17-113	1994-2004	1,294,920.00
Oxford Manufacturing Corp.	41 G. De Jesus St., Caloocan City	113-18-138-02-008-B001	1994-2004	1,614,679.10
P L D T	PLDT Towers, Ayala Ave., Makati City	113-26-177-04-003-B001	1999-2004	2,954,137.04
Papa, Ramon	MPFFE St., Pasay City	113-27-179-99-003	1974-2004	10,525,174.46
Philand Industries Inc.	88 Samson St., Caloocan City	113-13-110-01-010-B005	1995-2004	1,622,605.66
Phil-Ville Dev & Housing Corp	25 Gov. Pascual Ave., Malabon City	113-11-086-02-059	2002-2004	398,694.23
Phil-Ville Dev. & Housing Corp.	25 Gov. Pascual Ave., Malabon City	113-11-086-02-060	2002-2004	205,360.66
Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.	156 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	113-06-054-06-008-B001	1996-2004	1,070,848.66
Pioneer Texturizing Corp	Camarin Rd Caloocan City	113-26-175-47-001	1994-2004	1,931,567.23
PNR	Tutuban St., Manila	113-08-073-01-001-B064	1992-2004	5,326,178.94
PNR	Tutuban St., Manila	113-08-073-01-001-B150	1992-2004	1,232,857.39
PNR	Tutuban St., Manila	113-08-073-01-001-B251	1992-2004	10,201,916.51
Reyes Queteria	Balanga, Bataan	113-11-087-02-002	1993-2004	1,090,860.00
Rivera, Eleuteria	Cor. Rizal Ave. Ext & Mc Arthur Hi-way, Caloocan City	113-09-081-03-042	1999-2004	4,136,767.43
Rovero, Teofila Z.	98 P. Jacinto St., Caloocan City	113-22-165-03-147	1994-2004	2,827,395.10
Royal Laurence Rutter	Rm. 504 Borja Bldg., Manila	113-15-102-01-038	1974-2004	2,516,661.05
Serenity Memorial Park Inc.	Tutuban St., Manila	113-25-171-82-002	2001-2004	1,698,916.45
Sevilla, Isabelita R	205 Rizal Ave. Ext., Caloocan City	113-06-055-06-002-B003	1998-2004	1,198,257.97
So Hanson G. m/to Larcy M.	34 Apostol St., San Lorenzo Village, Makati City	113-02-014-08-002-B001	1994-2004	1,299,477.48
Sps. Dominador & Carmen Figueroa	2275 Taft Ave., Manila	113-19-160-05-131	1977-2004	1,085,930.00
Standard Printing & Binding Co.	177 Cordero St., Grace Park, Caloocan City	113-06-051-01-023-M004	1974-2004	1,384,547.72
Super Metalwood Ind'l. Inc.	24 Golden Rd. Ind'l. Subd. Kaybiga Caloocan City	113-23-167-53-032-B002	1992-2004	1,692,720.37
Super Metalwood Ind'l. Inc.	24 Golden Rd. Ind'l. Subd. Kaybiga, Caloocan City	113-23-167-53-032-B001	1995-2004	2,396,897.52
Tan Hiong F	1565 J. Luna St., Tondo, Manila	113-25-171-99-776	1994-2004	2,074,322.54
Tan, Wilson	1167 P. Algue St., Manila	113-22-165-19-006-B001	1985-2004	1,880,101.85
Tirado, Norma D.	5 Tiburcio St. Ext. Krus na Ligas, Diliman, Quezon City	113-18-156-05-005	1996-2004	1,084,243.00
Unilver Philippines Prc Inc.	Gen. Luis St., Kaybiga, Caloocan City	113-22-165-28-015-M001	1996-2004	13,973,513.63
Uniwide Sales Realty	90 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City	113-08-072-01-005-B003	2000-2004	14,858,190.87
Winmar Poultry Farm Inc.	Llano, Caloocan City	113-23-167-99-056-B007	1981-2004	2,767,123.04
Zenith Elect. & Indl. Supply Corp.	649 A. Torres St., Sta Cruz, Manila	113-06-055-05-014-B001	1995-2004	1,069,169.44
				P 918,866,370.49

Unless the above-cited delinquent taxes, surcharges and penalties are paid before the expiration of the year for which the tax is due, the said properties will be sold at public auction and the title to the property will be vested in the purchaser, subject however, to the right of the delinquent owner of the property or any person having legal interest therein to redeem the property within one (1) year from the date of sale. Personal property of the owner shall also be distrained in order to effect full payment of the said tax delinquency.

If payments have been made, please bring your official receipts and proceed to the City Treasurer's Office for updating and/or reconciliation of your records with us.

Caloocan City, January 3, 2005.

LOURDES R. JOSE
City Treasurer

(PDI – January 6, 2005)

US bank says client 'forgot' her investment

From page A1

account officer and other bank officers and respondent bank itself of negligence and fraud in the handling of her account," Citibank said.

Emily Santos, the bank's relationship manager who had convinced Poblador to invest in Benpres bonds, said in an affidavit that she was not remiss in briefing Poblador on the risks involved in investing in Benpres. She said that right from the start she made it clear to Poblador that the placement would be the obligation of Benpres and not of Citibank.

Not remiss

Santos' affidavit, dated May 12, 2004, claimed it was Poblador who had asked for other investment instruments as she was not satisfied with the rates Santos had quoted on time deposits.

"As I enumerated the various bonds available then, such as JG Summit, SM Prime and Benpres, Ms Poblador immediately expressed interest in Benpres bonds as she mentioned that she was familiar with the company and knew somebody in the management of Benpres," Santos said.

Santos claimed that she made it clear to Poblador that Benpres bonds were being repriced every six months and that she could sell her holdings provided a buyer was available.

Aa rating

Aside from the revocable trust agreement (RTA), Poblador also signed a directional letter and issuer's list, which contained the possible investment destinations, according to Santos.

"From June 1997 until prior to October 2001, I never received any complaint from Ms Poblador regarding difficulty in contacting me or that she was not receiving her statements/investment documents from the bank," Santos said.

At the time Poblador executed the RTA, the bank, in a briefing paper to the BSP, noted that Benpres had a local credit rating of Aa from the Credit Information Bureau and Philratings, and her investment was earning better than time deposits and Treasury bills.

Citibank refuted Poblador's allegation that she never received a confirmation of investment (COI), saying this had been faithfully sent to her in accordance with established banking practice.

Not 'unwitting victim'

The US bank said each COI "boldly disclosed" that: "The interest rate in payment amount quoted above is neither assured nor guaranteed by us and it does not, thereby entitle you to a fixed interest or return on your investment."

The bank also pointed out that Poblador, contrary to her portrayal of herself as an unwitting victim, was well aware of the nature of her investments, on the following grounds:

- On Dec. 21, 1998, or 18 months after executing the RTA and the directed trust and issuer's list, she partially liquidated her investment by selling $50,000 of the bonds, reducing her exposure to $100,000.
- On June 29, 1999, she again purchased $50,000 of Benpres bonds and another $7,746.26 of the same.
- On Dec. 20, 1999, she liquidated the most recent investment of $7,746.26 plus the interest earned on it.

Authorized transactions

These were the very transactions that Poblador claimed she did not authorize but which Citibank claimed really emanated from her.

"Curiously, complainant never alleged that these transfers from her time deposit accounts for reinvestment were unauthorized until three years later from the date of investment," Citibank said.

The bank said it would have been impossible for Poblador not to have noticed that $57,746.26 was transferred from her time deposit account until about three years later—considering that this amount constituted 70 percent of her time deposit at the time.

"It is obvious that complainant has made the allegations because Benpres has defaulted on Benpres bonds. As a consequence of such default, when complainant finally decided to sell her Benpres bonds on Aug. 20, 2003 the sale price was lower than her acquisition price," the bank said.

Misinterpreted

In addition, the bank said Poblador had misinterpreted her discussions with Citibank's account officers when the price of Benpres bonds dropped to 60 percent levels.

At one such meeting, Citibank officials said she was given the option to execute a custodianship agreement in lieu of the RTA, which would have enabled the bank to open a special custodianship with Cedel (Clearstream Bank) under Poblador's name for a fee.

Another option proposed was for Poblador to transfer the safekeeping of her Benpres bonds to another bank, but this would likewise need coordination with Cedel, a financial institution which provides clearing settlement and custody services.

Afterthought

"Undoubtedly, these serious allegations of negligence and fraud on the part of respondents [are] a mere afterthought on complainant's part in a beguiling effort to extricate herself from an investment that had been initially lucrative but which had turned sour," Citibank said.

Having signed the RTA and related documents, the bank said it was given full authority by Poblador to make the investments. As a result, Citibank said she neither had the legal nor factual basis to question her investments, even in Benpres bonds.

Citibank cited Article 1315 of the Civil Code: "Contracts are perfected by mere consent and from the moment the parties are bound not only to the fulfillment of what has been expressly stipulated but also to all the consequences which, according to their nature, may be in keeping with good faith, usage and law."

Misunderstanding of terms?

Citing *Torres vs CA* 320 SCRA 430, the bank also noted that not even the judicial courts were authorized to spare parties from the necessary consequences of their acts.

"And the fact that the contractual stipulations may turn out to be financially disadvantageous will not relieve parties hereto of their obligations. They cannot avow the relationship formed from such an agreement due to their supposed misunderstanding of its terms."

Shrugging off complaint?

Also cited was the Supreme Court ruling in the case of *Vales vs Villa* (35 Phil. 769, 788 (1916): "Men may do foolish things, make ridiculous contracts, use miserable judgment and lose money by them, indeed all they have in the world; but not for that alone can the law intervene and restore."

Based on its communiqué through its legal counsel Romulo Mabanta Buenaventura Sayoc & De los Angeles, Citibank appears to be shrugging off Poblador's complaint as mere harassment.

The law firm said the foreign bank was reserving its right to file the appropriate legal action against Poblador, claiming that the complaint was "nothing but an attempt to force the bank to make some sort of settlement despite the paucity of her claim." *(Tomorrow: Flaws of trusteeship in the Philippines and BSP response)*

Cops to be trained to keep . . .

From page A1

Manila University and De La Salle University are set to give policemen free lessons on grammar and stress management.

Beginning next month, these experts will go around the country to give lectures specially designed for men in uniform, according to Margarita "Ting Ting" Cojuangco, chair of the Philippine Public Safety College, the leading institution handling police education.

The idea was born out of necessity and urgency.

"Policemen should be able to defend cases in court. But sometimes their grammar is not correct so judges get impatient," Cojuangco told reporters after paying a courtesy call on Aglipay at Camp Crame yesterday.

Some police officers also are humiliated simply because they cannot speak English well, or speak it at all, she explained.

The PNP plans a long-term campaign to eliminate the culture of "carabao English" in the 115,000-strong police force, generals and colonels not excluded.

How-to manual

More than a week ago, PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil published "Santinig," a 47-page manual designed to guide officers on what to say and how to say it during media interviews.

Come February, a special seminar on stress management prepared by Ateneo will try to cool hot heads at the PNP. So, when their bosses say maximum tolerance, club-wielding cops will do just that even toward rowdy protesters.

"Everybody gets irritated," Cojuangco said. "What we will do is we will have case studies and learn how policemen are supposed to deal with specific situations. It will basically be a course on psychology."

Strategic intelligence

La Salle professors want to contribute with lectures on "strategic intelligence," lessons that will deal with the economy and how it affects the country and law enforcement, she said.

There's no escaping the new seminars the PPSC and the PNP have devised for policemen.

By the time they reach the mandatory retirement age of 56, they shall have completed these lectures, cooled down and begun speaking better English, Cojuangco hoped.

These lessons are on top of the values formation and leadership training seminar series Aglipay has prepared for all cops, two months before his term expires.

On Tuesday, Aglipay sent 55 senior officers to a special trainers' training course in Clark Field, Pampanga, and Subic, Zambales.

The officers described as the "most trusted and the most committed," will later "cascade" or share these lessons down the PNP hierarchy, Aglipay said.

Retires March 13

By the time he leaves on March 13, Aglipay is hoping to see the rising of a Cop Land where policemen are "God-centered, service-oriented and family-based."

Horrors 'worse than war'

From page A1

Haggard, dehydrated tsunami survivors have been flooding hospitals. Psychologists were struggling to help children cope with unspeakable tragedy. Aftershocks added to the threats, with another strong quake felt Wednesday, rattling the region but causing no known injuries.

Donor conference

Powell was one of the first to arrive in Indonesia ahead of today's donor conference, where world leaders will iron out problems coordinating the relief operation and discuss the need for a tsunami warning system for the Indian Ocean. One already exists in the Pacific.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who left for Jakarta yesterday, called for the extension of any warning mechanism to include all coastal nations.

"We have seen and even experienced the price of being caught unaware of devastating calamities. Disaster mitigation must now be everyone's and every nation's business. Once more, each nation must act locally but think globally," she said.

The donor conference is primarily an Association of Southeast Asian Nations affair, but foreign ministers including Britain's Jack Straw will be also be present with representatives from the European Union and leading aid and financial institutions, including the World Bank.

With more than a dozen premiers and foreign ministers vying for time with leading global groups, little concrete progress is expected during the eight-hour snap summit.

Japan largest donor

Money has poured in from around the world, the largest share coming from Japan which contributed $500 million.

"I think Japan must do as much as it can to help," Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said, calling for companies in the world's second-largest economy to respond with donations to the kind of disaster seen "only once a century."

Even impoverished North Korea chipped in with a pledge of US$150,000. Convicts in Malaysia were donating money earned doing prison work. War-weary Afghans were donating blood and Kabul planned to send doctors.

But the fragility of relief and rehabilitation efforts was underscored by the temporary closure on Tuesday of the main, overstretched airport in Sumatra. On Wednesday, a load of aid supplies fell from a US helicopter over the island's city of Medan, hitting a shopping mall. No one was hurt.

Overcrowded hospitals

Pilots were ferrying survivors from hard-hit towns and villages in the region to medical help. But that created a new challenge for relief workers: bottlenecks at overcrowded hospitals.

About a dozen people lay on stretchers on the sidewalk outside Fakina Hospital in Banda Aceh. Many of the hospital's rooms had no power. Walls were flecked with blood and doctors had run out of stands for intravenous fluid bags, hanging them from cords strung across the ceiling.

"It's heartbreaking," said Leslie Ansag of Everett, Washington, a Navy medic from the American aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, which was off Sumatra to help the rescue effort.

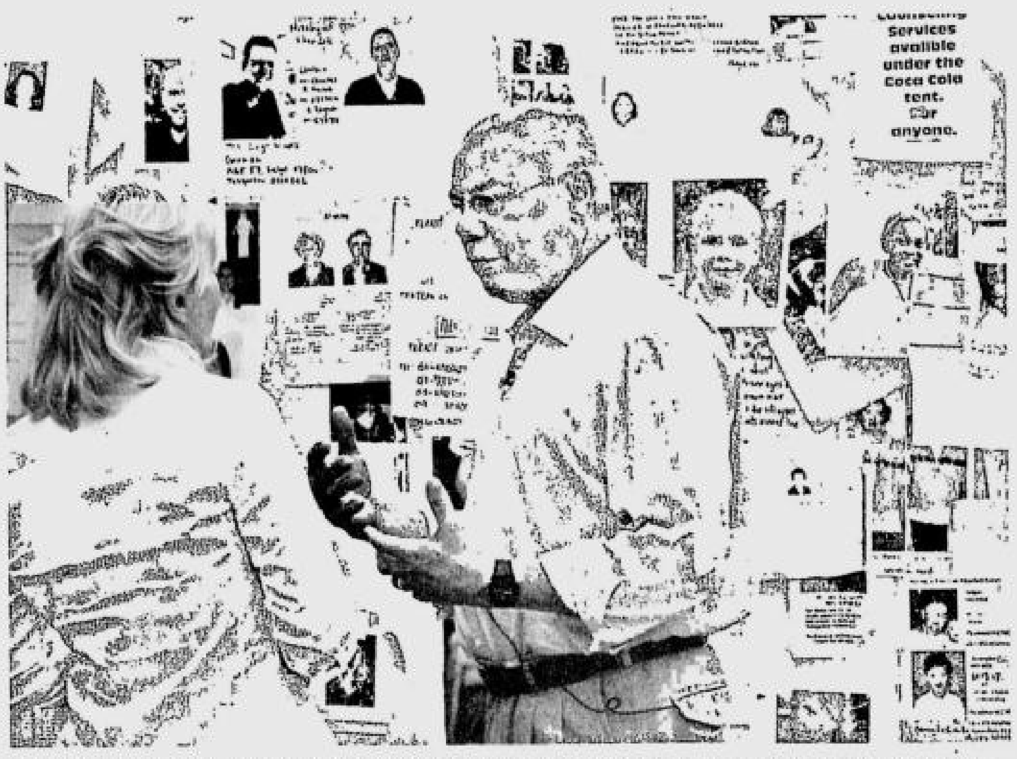
Kidnapped boy?

In Thailand, where more than 2,200 foreign tourists were among 5,000 killed, police said they were searching for a 12-year-old Swedish boy last seen leaving a hospital with an unknown man the day after the tsunami hit. Authorities said they could not confirm media reports that Kristian Walker had been kidnapped.

Police and UN officials have expressed fears that trafficking gangs will exploit the chaos of the disaster to abduct children and sell them into forced labor or even sexual slavery.

While children were getting help to cope with the psychological trauma of losing parents, brothers or sisters, aid agencies warned that they and other victims would need special attention for years to come.

In a psychiatric ward of a Karapitiya hospital in the Sri Lankan city of Galle, an area hammered by the tsunami, some patients banged their heads against the wall. Some, wide-eyed, just stared vacantly, while others mumbled "the sea is coming." *With reports from AP, AFP and Juliet Labog-Javellana*



AMERICAN celebs in Phuket: US Secretary of State Colin Powell talks to one of US media's superstars, ABC TV Diane Sawyer, at the provincial city hall where photos of the missing are posted on a board. AFP

A SALUTE for President Arroyo before her departure for Indonesia Wednesday afternoon to attend the international summit of world leaders who will discuss relief operations for tsunami victims and an early warning system to avert future disasters. ROGER MARGALLO

Rare story of survival

IN A RARE story of survival, rescue workers in Thailand freed a humpback dolphin from a small lagoon where the tsunami had dumped it, returning it to the Andaman Sea.

As about 150 people watched, soldiers captured the dolphin in a net, put it on a stretcher and pulled it up the muddy bank and into a pickup truck where it was laid on an air mattress and driven to the sea.

The rescuers then walked out into the water and released the dolphin, which quickly swam away.

Tsunami Tourist Casualties

The tally of foreigners confirmed dead from the quake and tsunami throughout southern Asia, according to their countries' foreign ministries. Figures also include the most recent available numbers of missing based on the estimates by some government officials and agencies. However definitions of missing vary, with some countries including all tourists who have failed to contact authorities while others only count those known to have been present when the tsunami hit.

Country	Dead	Missing
Germany	60	More than 1,000
Sweden	52	1,903
Britain	40	159
Switzerland	23	500
Japan	23	
France	22	Less than 90
Italy	18	436
Norway	16	91
United States	16	No clear estimate on missing
Finland	15	183
Australia	15	78
South Korea	11	
Austria	10	661
Russia	10	36
South Africa	9	896
Singapore	9	
Denmark	7	60
Netherlands	6	More than 30
Belgium	6	73
Canada	5	Up to 150
Philippines	5	13
Israel	4	3 feared dead
China	3	15
Taiwan	3	
New Zealand	2	24
Argentina	2	
Brazil	2	
Czech Republic	1	17
Poland	1	39
Turkey	1	16
Colombia	1	
Mexico	1	
Ireland		About 25
Hungary		20
Ukraine		17
Portugal		8
Romania		8
Greece		7
Belarus		5
Spain		4
Luxembourg		3
Estonia		3
Latvia		1
Chile		1
Croatia		1

AP

Death tolls by country

At least 139,703 people are reported dead around southern Asia and as far away as Somalia on Africa's eastern coast, most killed by massive tsunamis that smashed coastlines after a magnitude 9 earthquake off Indonesia's coast Dec. 26. The United Nations estimates the total number of dead will exceed 150,000.

Country	Dead
Indonesia	94,200
Sri Lanka	30,229
India	9,575
Thailand	5,246
Somalia	200
Myanmar	90
Maldives	82
Malaysia	68
Tanzania	10
Bangladesh	2
Kenya	1

AP

50 Pinoys working in Burmese resort safe

By Jerome Aning

SOME 50 Filipinos working in a coastal entertainment spot in Burma (Myanmar) were safe following the deadly tsunamis that struck countries along the Indian Ocean, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo yesterday said.

Citing the report of Philippine consul Pablito Mendoza, Romulo said no one among the 50 Filipinos working at the Andaman Club was hurt.

The club is a Thai-managed casino resort on one of the islands of the Myeik Archipelago.

Romulo said Philippine Embassy officials spoke with Rommel Ragasa, the club's Filipino floor manager, who said he and the others managed to evacuate and get to higher ground when the killer waves struck the island.

He thanked the embassy for its concern and for inquiring on the status of Filipino workers in Burma.

The Burmese government earlier put the toll at 53 killed and 21 missing. The country's military junta rarely gives any figures on natural disasters.

Satellite images of isolated Burmese shoreline revealed it was not as badly damaged by the deadly tsunamis as neighboring countries like Thailand.

The 12-member Philippine Medical-Civic Team, meanwhile, left for Colombo, Sri Lanka yesterday afternoon to help relief operations in the island-state. The team is made up of five doctors, five nurses and two sanitary engineers, who came from various hospitals and local government units.

Another team is set to leave for Jakarta in the next few days. The 10-man Philippine team is composed mainly of Department of Health personnel from the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao who have been deployed to the DOH Central Office in Manila.

The country earlier sent an eight-member forensic team to Phuket, Thailand to join the 300-member/19-nation disaster victim identification team that would conduct DNA analysis of the tsunami fatalities.

Friday prayer for typhoon, tsunami victims

THE ARCHDIOCESE of Manila has set a Holy Hour on the first Friday of the year for the victims of the super typhoons in the country and the tsunamis in South and Southeast Asia.

Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales directed all parishes, schools and religious communities to set aside one hour for prayer on Jan. 7.

Rosales issued guidelines for the conduct of the Holy Hour, which includes relevant Scripture readings.

The Holy Hour also suggests that a special collection be done to donate to the victims.

The Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has also called for a day of prayer on Jan. 9. *Blanche S. Rivera*

24-hour gov't hotline brings good and bad news

From page A1

wall of water swamped the building. The two friends were killed and Albao was missing.

"Maybe she's just in a hospital," said Jovita Albao, her eyes swollen from days of crying and sleeplessness.

"Hopefully ma'am. Let's pray that that's the case," Mendoza said.

Looking more sullen than hopeful, two elderly pairs left the Owwa operation center yesterday, clutching pictures of a young woman.

The four were just given directions to the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pasay City to confirm what could be the most dreaded news.

Long-lost daughter

Norma Llorente could find out that her long-lost daughter, Roma Cathryn Llorente, who has not been in touch with the family for three years, could be the Katrin Llorente on the list of 16 fatalities with Filipino-sounding names.

"That's the first family who has claimed a fatality with a Filipino-sounding name," Owwa operations center head duty officer Mustafa Glang said as the four closed the door.

"It's very hard to deal with those who have missing relatives because you don't always know what to tell them. Nobody is certain if they're dead or alive out there," Glang, a veteran welfare officer, said.

Undocumented workers

The Owwa could not help identify the Filipino victims because all those on the lists of fatalities and missing were not in the Owwa database.

Glang said "99.9 percent" of the Filipinos on the lists were undocumented workers and had no profile in the Owwa database.

Llorente, who stands 5'7", was supposedly a dancer in Thailand but no one could be sure. The 23-year-old native of Ilocos Norte left for Manila more than three years ago and worked as a saleslady in Isetann and Shoemart.

Her uncle July, with whom Llorente lived in Quezon City, told Owwa officers that Llorente started training as a dancer and told him she would soon go abroad. One day, Llorente packed her bags and never came back or kept in touch.

Mother's instinct

"It was just mother's instinct. They came here because the mother thought it was her daughter who died," Glang said. *AP and Blanche S. Rivera*

16 travel agencies in Japan divert tourists to RP

From page A1

hits following the Dec. 26 tsunamis that devastated popular resorts and beaches in the Indian Ocean.

Earlier, the Department of Tourism alerted its regional and overseas offices and attached agencies to boost promotional efforts in order to draw foreign tourists and travel agencies wanting to rechannel bookings from the stricken Asian countries.

Some quarters have labeled the DOT move as opportunism and greed, even "vulture tourism," but private industry leaders said it was merely the result of business competition.

"I don't care if we're accused of taking advantage of others' tragic loss," said Melo Villareal, webmaster of www.lakbaypilipinas.com. "In our case, we're just telling them plainly that we have alternative destinations here, and that what other countries have, the Philippines also has."

Philippine Tour Operators Association (Philtoa) president Leo Picaso told the INQUIRER of his hope that the diversions from Maldives would be followed by others.

He said that flights of foreign tourists originally destined for the tsunami-affected tourist spots had been diverted to Cebu starting on Dec. 28, and that Russian travelers wanting to avoid the stricken areas were considering the Philippines as an alternative.

Picaso said Philtoa was collating information from its members to determine exactly how many future bookings to the Philippines had been originally posted for the devastated areas in Thailand, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

He said many of the bookings were made for the future because most of the Philippine resorts were full, December and January being the peak-season months.

Daily hits doubled

In a phone interview, Villareal said the average number of daily hits of the www.lakbaypilipinas.com had doubled to 150,000-180,000.

"There was renewed interest in Philippine destinations as many viewers searched for alternative places to go for their next vacation," he said.

The site features destination options as well as facilities for on-line bookings and reservations at popular Philippine tourist spots.

The Philtoa's Picaso said his main worry was that the Philippines would be lumped with other Asian countries affected by the tsunamis.

"While we sympathize with those affected by the tragedy, we have to be ready to aid foreign tourists who want to come to the Philippines to spend their next vacation," he said.

Both Picaso and Villareal said it was but natural for local tourism leaders to push Philippine destinations in view of last year's negative international publicity on security problems, political instability, terror attacks and natural calamities.

They said the tourism industry had also suffered because of negative news on coup rumors, the heated presidential election, the bombing of the SuperFerry, the continuing kidnappings by the Abu Sayyaf, the avian flu scare and destructive typhoons that took place in 2003.

Challenge

Villareal said the tsunami-affected Asian countries just happened to be the Philippines' neighbor-competitors.

He claimed that in Bali, Indonesia, some resorts had come out with ads and promotional materials claiming that Bali was safer and more prepared against terrorism than the Philippines.

Some promoters even boasted that the number of casualties in terror attacks in Indonesia was much lower compared to that in the Philippines, he said.

According to Villareal, the current challenge to the Philippine tourism industry is to meet the anticipated increase in demand.

He said the renewed interest in Philippine tourist spots would, in the long run, attract and generate investments and create jobs.

DOJ presses humanitarian reason for Jalosjos pardon

From page A1

were to be followed, the reportedly ailing Jalosjos was not eligible for a conditional pardon.

"But there are such things as humanitarian reasons," Gonzalez said. "When [deposed] President [Joseph] Estrada was authorized by the Sandiganbayan to be incarcerated in Tanay [Rizal], that is for humanitarian reasons. There is no such animal as house arrest in any book in this country. But that is being considered."

Asked whether he would follow the law or humanitarian considerations, Gonzalez said: "I would rather follow the law. But if it is true that he is really sick, [we should not] let him die in prison."

Gonzalez again said that Malacañang had yet to decide on the issue. He also denied that pardoning the former representative of Zamboanga del Norte was intended as payment for a political debt. *(See Page A10.)*

Asked the administration's stand on the matter, he said: "We have not yet discussed this. I've said that many, many times. But ... newspapers said that I have said this or said that. We have not made any decision. ... I have not even talked to the President about this. This has never been raised in a Cabinet meeting or in the core group of the National Security Council."

Personal appeal

Jalosjos himself made a personal appeal for his freedom, saying his supporters far outnumbered his tormentors in praying for his health and liberty.

He made the appeal in an official statement written in Filipino, which was attached to a separate statement released yesterday by his brother and sister, both representatives of Zamboanga del Norte under the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas.

In their joint statement, Representatives Cesar Jalosjos and Cecilia Jalosjos-Carreon confirmed that their family through their mother had appealed to President Macapagal-Arroyo "for executive clemency for humanitarian reasons."

"Our brother, former Congressman Jalosjos, has been declared a perennial heart attack candidate. He is now almost 65 years old and has suffered several strokes and abnormal heartbeat," they said.

'Political color'

Gonzalez complained that when movie star Robin Padilla and other high-profile convicts were pardoned by past presidents, there was no uproar similar to what was supposedly prevailing now.

"This has [been given] political color, but it is directed at the President," he said, adding that it was unfair because Ms Arroyo had not even discussed the matter with him.

In Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita issued a similar disclaimer.

"The subject matter [of Jalosjos' pardon] was never discussed in the Office of the President. There is no communication whatsoever coming from the Department of Justice," he said, adding:

"From where I sit, I know this was just floated. I just don't how it came out that it is being considered by the President."

Ermita said that even before Ms Arroyo could consider exercising her power to free convicts, Jalosjos should first lodge an appeal with the Board of Pardons and Parole.

He said this was the official body assigned to submit to the President the names of persons who should be considered for executive clemency.

"In this case, no such thing has been submitted to Malacañang," he said.

When Jalosjos' mother called for his freedom over RMN radio, she said she had submitted a formal appeal to Ms Arroyo.

'Trust doctors'

Gonzalez said only a doctor's report on the health of Jalosjos would convince him that the latter was indeed sick, and to what degree.

"We have to trust doctors. It's the doctors' say," he said. But he added that a government doctor, and not a private practitioner, should make such a report.

The two Jalosjos lawmakers released to the media a one-page "medical abstract" issued by Dr. Perry Noble, a neurologist at the Makati Medical Center.

Noble said the ex-lawmaker had been "advised to be compliant of intake of medications and avoid risk factors which may lead to probable strokes in the future."

He identified the risk factors as "hypertension, high cholesterol, emotional and physical stress."

The Jalosjos lawmakers noted that under the Constitution, the power to grant executive clemency is vested on the President.

"It is therefore normal and legitimate that our family address our appeal to [her]," they said.

They added that the grant of executive clemency was "not without precedent" as the President "for humanitarian reasons, has exercised this power without objections from certain sectors" in the past.

"We are not asking for special treatment or favor," Jalosjos' siblings also said. They said their brother "wishes to spend his remaining senior years with his family and of service to the people of Zamboanga del Norte."

"For humanitarian reasons, he deserves the grant of executive clemency," they added.

Happiness in his suffering

In his own statement, Jalosjos said he had accepted all the "tribulations" that had happened in his life.

He said he had no anger for those who had been deriding him and continuing to "find happiness" in seeking him suffer. He said only God would be in judgment of them.

Jalosjos said he continued to nurse hope in the belief that many people were praying for his freedom and relief.

He called on the public to join him in praying and appealing to Ms Arroyo to grant "humanitarian pardon" to hundreds of elderly and sick prisoners.

"Their freedom is more important than mine," he said.

At the Fernandina forum, Gonzalez said a plan was "in the works" to release prisoners starting at age 70.

"The President wants to release all prisoners 70 and above," he said. "I was the one who raised the precaution on this, because there are many who are 70 [but] who are hardliners. They have not been reformed. So those who do not want to reform cannot be allowed to go back to society."

But he added: "We are trying our best to meet the standards that affect the human rights of people."

No formal motion

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman, whose agency is in charge of monitoring the condition of Jalosjos' rape victim, said there had been "no effort or formal motion" at the executive department to process papers regarding the ex-lawmaker's plea for pardon.

"I've personally made an inquiry with the Executive Secretary because civil society groups have been asking, and he has informed me that there is no such thing," Soliman told the INQUIRER.

What Malacañang and the Department of Social Welfare and Department are "actively processing" are the pardon requests of convicts aged 75 and above and of political prisoners, she said.

Soliman said the rape victim, who was 12 years old when Jalosjos was convicted in 1997, was no longer a Filipino citizen by virtue of her adoption abroad.

"At this point, there has been no communication [between her and the DSWD] because we want her to go on with her life. She's doing very well," Soliman said when asked if the girl had become aware of her attacker's plea for clemency.

Earlier, the child's lawyer, Katrina Legarda, said her former client was now "a straight-A" student in a university.

Letter of appeal

Manila Rep. Ernesto "Banzai" Nieva clarified that he had erred in saying that the appeal to grant executive clemency to Jalosjos was contained in a resolution of the House.

"I stand corrected. It was a letter of appeal, not a resolution," Nieva said.

The Office of Deputy Speaker Gerry Salapuddin of Basilan also denied the existence of the resolution. It said that it had no copy of such a resolution, and that if ever the resolution existed, Salapuddin did not file or initiate it.

Senate President Franklin Drilon urged Ms Arroyo to seriously consider the concerns raised by the anti-crime and civil society groups that had voiced opposition to Jalosjos' pardon, including "its negative impact on the campaign against crime, especially the crime against minors."

Double standard

"I share the view of many that granting Jalosjos pardon would only reinforce the misimpression of a double standard of justice in the Philippines where the rich and the powerful always get preferential treatment," Drilon said in a statement he read to reporters.

Citing reports that Jalosjos suffered a stroke last month, Drilon also said the Bureau of Corrections should confine the ex-lawmaker in a hospital and "treat him like any other prisoner needing medical attention."

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said Jalosjos was "disqualified from charity from the state because to rape such a defenseless and underaged victim is a crime above the normal or the ordinary."

Extreme caution

Sen. Pia Cayetano urged Ms Arroyo to exercise "extreme caution" in deciding on the matter.

"I am joining the groups in hoping that we send the correct signal that we are here to protect our children," she said. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendaño, Cynthia D. Balana and Volt Contreras*

GMA beat FPJ in Jalosjos stronghold

By Ryan D. Rosauro
PDI Mindanao Bureau

OZAMIZ CITY—A political bargain appears to be in the works with the move to seek a pardon for former Rep. Romeo "Nonong" Jalosjos of Zamboanga del Norte.

A source from the Jalosjos camp said that during the closely fought election in May, most of the ex-lawmaker's allies sided with President Macapagal-Arroyo—"an indication of who [had received] Nonong's political blessings."

Ms Arroyo edged out actor Fernando Poe Jr. by over 100,000 votes in Zamboanga del Norte. The source said only the province's third district voted for Poe.

According to a local politician who spoke on condition of anonymity, Jalosjos continues to wield vast influence in the province despite his absence because of a "highly functional political machine" run by loyal lieutenants.

The well-oiled operation of this political machine requires that Jalosjos personally call the shots, the politician said.

The success of Jalosjos, his relatives and allies in the past two elections illustrates the clout he has been wielding from his cell in the New Bilibid Prisons.

Already in jail, he clinched a third term as congressman of the first district of Zamboanga del Norte in 2001. But he was stripped of the post when the Supreme Court ruled with finality on his 1997 conviction of statutory rape.

In the 2004 general elections, the Jalosjos political bandwagon notched a landslide win, taking the two top provincial posts, almost all seats in the provincial board and the three seats in the House.

His sister, Cecilia Carreon, was reelected representative of the first district, a post she won in 2002 in a special election when Jalosjos was stripped of his seat.

His brother, Cesar, a former board member, won as congressman of the third district. Another brother, Dominador, took the mayoral seat of Dapitan, defeating James Adasa of the dominant political clan.

The Jalosjos camp reportedly made waves under the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, which had an alliance with the ruling Lakas and was steered at that time by then National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales.

Gonzales is now Ms Arroyo's chief of staff.

Mike A sends emissary to nip mad Rosebud

From page A1

Quevedo would be removed because I'm exposing FG?" Ong said.

Ong has been under the protective custody of the Isafp since she testified in 2001 on the alleged links of Lacson and his associates to drug trafficking, kidnapping and money laundering.

Witness protection program

The Isafp has been assigned by the Department of Justice to protect Ong following her inclusion in the DOJ's Witness Protection Program.

Ong's verbal attacks stupefied Antonio, who was unaware that the INQUIRER was also in the room.

Antonio, who maintained that he was there on his own, then asked her: "What do you want from FG? I can talk to him."

"Your boss sent you, so tell your boss to be sincere. Tell him not to meddle with governance. Tell him that the money that I am collecting would come from government, not from his personal funds or from Jose Pidal's account," Ong replied.

Jose Pidal was allegedly the name that Arroyo used to open several bank accounts where he deposited campaign contributions, and other funds that went into hundreds of millions. But at a Senate hearing, which was prompted by Lacson's exposé on the Jose Pidal accounts, the First Gentleman's younger brother, Rep. Ignacio Arroyo, claimed that he owned the Jose Pidal accounts.

Official business

Antonio said Ong could write a letter to the First Gentleman. "Tell him everything," he said.

"Why should I? He has nothing to do with governance. I am collecting what is due me. This is official business, that's why I (send letters) to the President," Ong said.

In one of those letters, Ong pleaded with President Macapagal-Arroyo to help her collect her agent's fees from two intelligence projects in 1997 and 1998, which Lacson, when he was the Philippine National Police (PNP) chief, refused to pay.

ARROYO: His emissary is stupefied.

ONG: Am collecting what's due me.

She said three other PNP chiefs, Leandro Mendoza, Roberto Lastimoso, Hermogenes Ebdane, and even incumbent PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay, had agreed that the amount should be taken from the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission (PACC) under the Office of the President. The PACC funds came from the now defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force that Lacson headed.

Funding for US trip

Ong said the PACC funds, which have been placed under the Office of the President, was also used to finance the trip she made to the United States in late 2001 with businesswoman Blanquita Pelaez and three intelligence officers ostensibly to gather evidence on Lacson's money laundering cases.

So far, none of the cases filed against Lacson had prospered.

According to Ong, a portion of the PACC funds was also used to pay for the handcuffs that Pelaez had supplied to the PNP during the time of Lastimoso, but which Lacson refused to pay during his term as PNP chief.

That's why in October, Ong said she went to Deputy Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration Susan "Ching" Vargas for her agent's fees, which would come from the PACC.

At a meeting in Malacañang, Ong said Vargas agreed to pay P3 million, but told her, "Your bag is too small. You just get it from my house tomorrow," Ong said.

FG's approval needed?

But in a text message to Ong later in the day, Vargas said that FG had approved only P500,000.

"But how can FG reverse the decision of a deputy executive secretary? And why the need to get FG's approval when Vargas is a Cabinet level official?" Ong said.

Antonio said Arroyo would be paying Ong "from his personal account."

"I only want what's due me from the government, not from his personal account," Ong insisted.

Ong said she filed her first case against Lacson before the Ombudsman on Jan. 8, 2001, just two weeks ahead of the people power revolution that ousted President Joseph Estrada and installed Ms Arroyo to power.

Kicked around

She said she was in China when Victor Corpus, then Isafp chief, asked her to come home to testify against Lacson at a Senate hearing in September 2001.

"They were practically begging me to help them but after I testified, here I am, being kicked around," Ong told the INQUIRER. *With a report from Alcuin Papa*

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2 Cabinet men say government should honor deal

From page A1

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita backed Mendoza's position. "Well, yes if indeed there is a written contract I support the position (of Mendoza)," Ermita said. But he said he was "not privy" to Ong's dealings with the government.

Ong said President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband blocked the payment of P3 million that Deputy Executive Secretary for Finance and Administration Susana "Ching" Vargas had promised to release to her. The money was to come from the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission (PACC), which supposedly still had funds from the dissolved Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).

Ong said Vargas told her through text messages that Mike Arroyo had instructed her to release only P500,000.

But Vargas yesterday said Malacañang had "put on hold" the payment of P3 million because Ong was claiming the money for services she supposedly rendered to the government in 1998 and 1999. But Vargas admitted that the First Gentleman gave Ong P500,000 from his "personal funds."

Vargas said Mendoza had called her up sometime in October last year to ask her that "we should help" Ong who wanted to collect her fees. "I said ask her to come and when she came to my office she brought a folder," Vargas said.

Vargas said she told Ong that as mere OIC (officer in charge) of the PAOCTF she had to "clear everything with the boss," the President.

She asked why Ong was claiming the fees only now when these were supposed to be for services rendered in 1998 and 1999.

"I was a former COA (Commission on Audit) auditor. It's fundamental in law that whenever there is disbursement of funds there should be a legal, valid basis," Vargas said in a radio interview.

Still, Ong received P500,000 courtesy of the President's husband. Vargas said Ong picked up the money from her (Vargas') house.

Ungrateful

The First Gentleman denied meddling into government affairs, saying that the funds he gave Ong were "private funds" raised by him and his friends.

In a telephone interview, Arroyo said he felt betrayed that Ong had exploited his acts of charity by claiming that he had been meddling in the affairs of government.

"I feel so frustrated. What is the world coming to? You help a person in need and she turns around and accuses you of so many things," he told the INQUIRER yesterday morning.

Admitting that he gave Ong P500,000 through Vargas, the First Gentleman said Ong was a "charity case."

"She's biting the hand that's feeding her. She's so ungrateful," he said.

Other acts of kindness

Apart from giving Ong P500,000 in "financial assistance" for her property that was about to be foreclosed last year, the President's husband said he also gave her P21,000 for the medical needs of Ong's mother in 2003; P107,000 for the physician's professional fee for Ong's father; and P200,000 for Ong's foundation, which goes under the acronym "WAP."

"I was only showing her kindness, now I'm the one being portrayed as a bad man," he said.

Asked what could have motivated Ong to drag him into the mess, he replied: "I think she wants more."

'Reserve force'

Ong had accused Arroyo of allegedly blocking the release of P3 million to keep her as a "reserve force" against Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson, who had accused the First Gentleman of money laundering.

The First Gentleman said Ong should instead go after her past handlers. But he doubts whether Ong could get anything from the PACC because she had "no supporting documents" to show that she had done services to the government.

"She cannot be paid by the government because she cannot present the supposed contract or show what services she had rendered to the government," he said.

But Mendoza said he agreed with Ong that she should get her fees for being an agent of the police.

Helpful against criminality

"We've been helping her. We know our responsibility over Ms Ong because she was really very helpful against criminality even when I was with the PNP," Mendoza said.

But he said he did not sign any contract with Ong during his term as PNP chief.

"You see I have talked to Rosebud several times and she was telling me—even when I was still chief PNP—about a contract she signed sometime in 1998 during the time of Lacson (who had served as PNP and PAOCTF chief) and I was telling her, I was out of the service already when we talked about this, I was telling her if there is a contract then government has to honor that contract," Mendoza said.

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EDITORIALS

Forgiveness

THE OLD-BOYS CLUB otherwise known as Congress appears to be plumping itself up to bully proportions in the case of ex-Rep. Romeo Jalosjos. That's assuming it's true that, as Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said Tuesday, as many as 50 congressmen have affixed their signatures to a resolution seeking a pardon for the convicted child rapist. But then it's not difficult to believe, and even Gonzalez (who, if he didn't have an official title and rank in the Cabinet, could credibly pass for a spokesman/publicist for Jalosjos) points out that, for one, politics can play a significant role in the matter, and that, for another, the 50-strong Greek chorus can muster "some persuasive effect."

Indeed, and particularly so if such a resolution actually exists and the number of signatories is 50 and counting. The compleat politician that she is (and, as Gonzalez has decreed, the final arbiter on the matter), President Macapagal-Arroyo can easily take the persuasive signatures in advisement and announce that, yes, the former representative of Zamboanga del Norte is forgiven of the crime of raping an 11-year-old.

Outrageous? Absolutely. Absurd? That, too. But entirely possible in this double-standard setting where deposed presidents charged with plunder fly to Hong Kong for knee surgery, dictators' wives flash diamonds and rubies to stun the social set not too long after being rousted out of the Palace, once-upon-a-time firebrands crying revolution now serve as sops to the dribs and drabs of presidential power—and prisoners of impoverished means, including dissidents who should have known freedom long ago, die slowly in miserable conditions behind bars. In fact, entirely possible in the light of the possibilities posed by the time-tested tradition of quid pro quo.

Certain organizations have observed that the campaign for Jalosjos' pardon may be part of an exchange deal. The militant women's alliance Gabriela suspects an arrangement beneficial to Ms Arroyo and Jalosjos' "influential family," and the Equal Justice for All Movement (E-Just), a mutual back-scratching involving Malacañang-backed tax measures at one end. E-Just notes, quite correctly, the particular vulnerability of the President to political pressure by virtue of her need for Congress' support regarding her pet measures. But it can also be said that she is hardly one to chafe at such a vulnerability and has been known to wield it to advantage (recall her amazing willingness to clamber into Mike Velarde's van at one of the El Shaddai's rural assemblies when she was campaigning for election and seeking endorsements from sect leaders and snake oil salesmen).

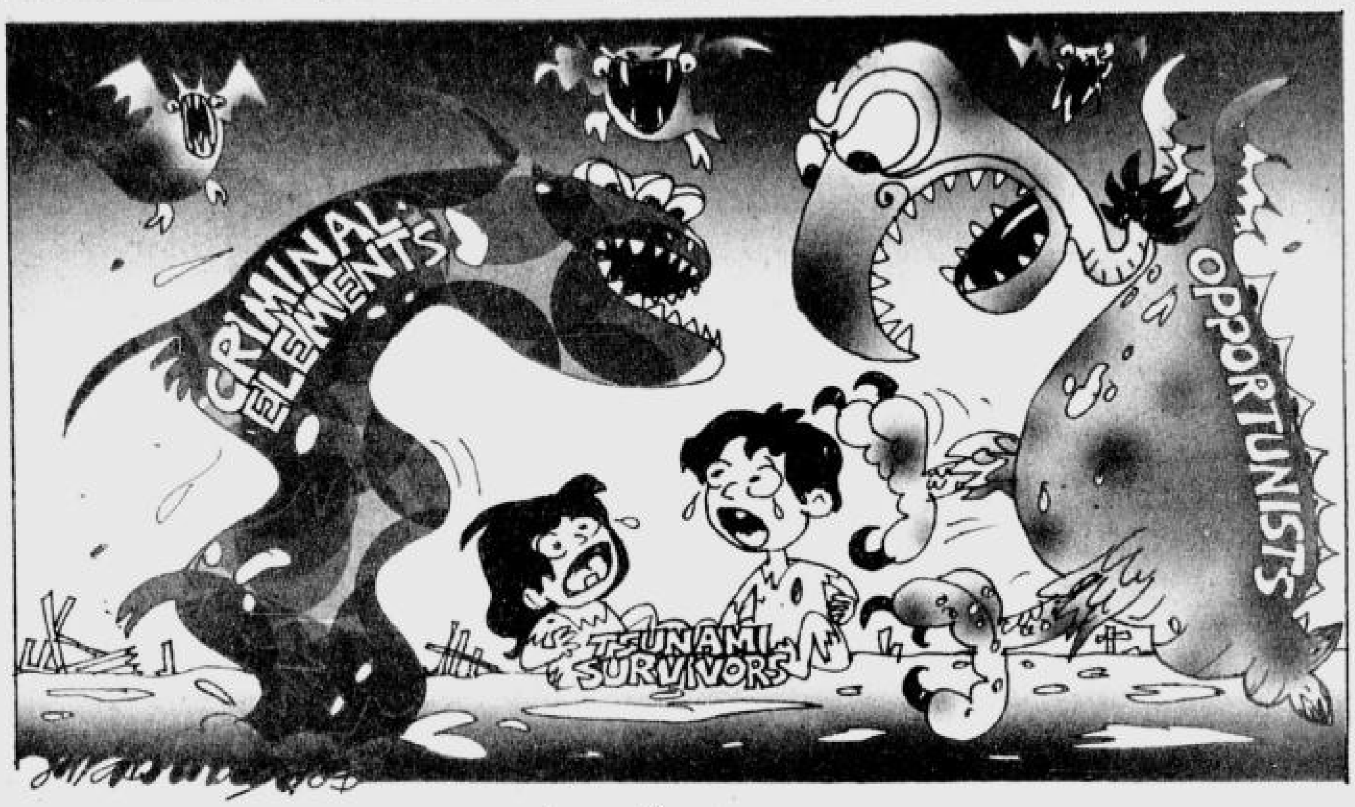
There is no gainsaying the anguish of Jalosjos' mother at learning that he had been laid low by a reported stroke. She is, after all, in her twilight years and has nothing to do with her son's crime. But Ms Arroyo and her people better think twice about pardoning Jalosjos on the basis of his reported medical condition (or whatever supposed good behavior he may have exhibited while in the clinker). The old Estrada trick (whether pater or fils) is wearing thin.

Besides, she cannot reward every bleeding bloke who supposedly delivered votes for her in May. There aren't enough rewards to go around (although that may be a gross underestimation of the spoils)—and who knows what "Da King's" pending electoral protest will result in?

Guilt

WHY is the justice secretary shooting his mouth off on Romeo Jalosjos' case, when in fact he should put his foot in? Why is he complaining at length about "political color" when he had just acknowledged the politics that would necessarily be factored into a decision to pardon the man?

And why is he drawing a parallel between Robin Padilla, a movie star, and Jalosjos, a member of Congress (at least when the crime was committed)? Padilla, once called, on good basis, the "Bad Boy of Philippine Movies," was convicted of illegal possession of firearms; Jalosjos was convicted of raping a child. If a life was violated, if power was abused, if malicious intent was wielded in the course of the perpetration of either crime, whose guilt is clear?



Blood money

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

CASH-STRAPPED Malacañang lofted a trial balloon for a fire sale of sequestered 27 percent of San Miguel Corp. stocks. The *baratillo* proposal followed the anti-graft court's ruling upholding two earlier decisions declaring that the coconut levies used to snap up SMC and United Coconut Planters Bank shares were taxes, not Marcos cronies' slush fund.

"The Sandiganbayan decision…should further strengthen our fiscal position," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye. But he "did not elaborate on how and when government planned to sell the SMC shares," INQUIRER's Gil Cabacungan wrote.

Instead, Bunye dove for the nearest bunker. Expletives erupted after this hint about the Palace dipping into the levy. This is, after all, blood money. Martial law edicts extorted them from helpless coconut farmers. Indeed, "there's much law at the end of a bayonet."

Assassins ambushed former Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez, who was among the first to assail the levy. "It was the communists," shrugged the dictator. Ferdinand Marcos crafted Presidential Decree 276 to Executive Order 828. These enabled a cabal to milk hybrid seedlings and copra mills and have a monopoly of coconut oil exports.

Like Robert Mugabe's brutal rule in today's Zimbabwe, the Marcos regime "turned deaf to the sighs of orphans and drank the tears of children." In a blunt 1996 open letter, Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and 95 other religious and civic leaders wrote: "Levies were taxes imposed on farmers through abuse of state power… These are public funds owned by the Filipino people (but) it is claimed and controlled by Marcos cronies."

By then, the levy had ballooned to P100 billion. Men have killed for 30 pieces of silver. Thus, the Estrada administration scrambled to ensure the cronies' grip on the levy.

"Estrada's shoddy Ultimo Adios (were) Executive Orders 313 and 315," the Cebu Daily News noted in a Jan. 22, 2003 editorial. "Issued shortly before People Power 2 yanked him from Malacañang, these midnight directives insisted the coco levy were private funds.

"Erap dumped levy funds on the laps of the 'moneybag' aristocracy while invoking the name of impoverished theft victims. The grossest betrayals are always masked by a kiss."

Under Chief Justice Hilario Davide, the courts shattered the gridlock of 800-plus feet-dragging motions, lodged over 17 years by Marcos cronies to hang on to the blood money. Levies were public funds, the Supreme Court ruled.

In reaction, Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition's "Brat Pack" in Congress tried to impeach a magistrate who sought to end the gorging.

The Sandiganbayan's First Division buttressed further the Supreme Court's ruling by upholding two landmark decisions that forfeited, in favor of the government, "coco levy-funded shares that cronies of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos acquired in SMC and UCPB," Volt Contreras reported.

In decisions penned by Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, the court junked reconsideration motions filed by Cojuangco and his co-claimants, the Philippine Coconut Federation (Cocofed) and martial law overseer and now Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

Associate Justices Diosdado Peralta and Francisco Villaruz concurred with the Sandiganbayan's earlier ruling. The defendants must prove the levies "became legitimately private funds," the court said, but they failed to do so. Instead, they rehashed old arguments which the court had trashed earlier. "It's high time that…coconut farmers who contributed to it, and the entire industry, be given a chance to reap the benefits due them."

In their no-nonsense May 2004 ruling, De Castro and associates awarded to the government the 27-percent block of prime SMC shares. In July 2003, the court forfeited 72.2 percent of UCPB's outstanding stocks in favor of the government. "The shares are ordered reconveyed," De Castro wrote then.

These forthright decisions uncorked a flood of suggestions on how levy funds could be used to rehabilitate an industry pummeled into sunset status by the massive plunder of unrepentant cronies. Even Johnnys-come-lately in radical Left fronts (often a cubby-hole with computer and fax machine) churn out press releases on the issue.

The method is a valid issue for national debate. Among ideas circulating is that of a permanent trust fund, drawing only on the interest, to underwrite programs. This long-term method was examined when World War II Japanese reparations were in the pipeline. That, too, was blood money. But the piranhas got there first. And corruption dissipated the use of reparation.

Our track record with trust funds is not gilt-edged. A Marcos apparatchik in mufti, Erap never grasped the concept of accountability. Under President Fidel Ramos, the Armed Forces Modernization Fund disappeared without a trace, leaving soldiers with worn-out boots, shoddy uniforms and tin helmets.

As bill collectors snap at her heels, President Macapagal-Arroyo toys with the idea of a levy assets' fire sale. That'd be theft, the second time around, of powerless farmers' blood money. To turn "deaf to the sighs of orphans and drink the tears of children" demands a strong stomach.

Will the President beat off the temptation to snitch by yielding? Her shoddy reappointments to the Commission on Elections raise doubts. But that's the demon of skepticism which the President, who prayed with pastors, said should be exorcised. Get thee behind me, Satan.

* * *

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Go plant camote

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE was saying at a table last week: Why do the local fast-food chains insist on serving French fries? Why don't they serve instead "Filipino fries," made from camote, or sweet yam, rather than potatoes? Why do we insist on growing potatoes on huge tracts of land, which are better for growing other things like rice and corn and, yes, camote? Indeed, why do we insist on importing potatoes when local substitutes are easily there? Camote is far more plentiful and possibly more nutritious. It certainly is not inferior taste-wise. It blends well with the hamburgers and chicken they serve at fast-food joints, such as you can even talk of gastronomic harmony among the gooey (and fattening) stuff to be found there.

Well, I do know that the French are befuddled at how so atrocious an invention as strips of potatoes dipped, or drowned, in containers of boiling cooking oil can be attributed to them. It is typically American, they say, both the invention of the food and the invention of its provenance. The French rather like to think of themselves as having more culinary imagination, or daring, the latter to be found in the pride of place escargot occupies in their menus. That, for the fast-food legions, means snails, or our very own *kuhol*.

I do know as well that the Brits call "French fries" chips. That's what you get when you order fish and chips, the chips there being "French fries." I used to think the chips meant potato chips in the sense of Lay's or Jack 'n Jill potato chips, but that wasn't so at all. If you order the fish and chips in the *banketa*, such as their simpler food stores can be called that, they wrap the chips in newspaper, and the sheer quantity of the thing will curb your appetite for potatoes. I used to like "French fries" until I got a surfeit of it in London. "Easy on the stuff," I'd tell the vendor. He'd say yes, and still shovel the thing into a whole newspaper page twisted into a cone.

Well, if the Brits are known for culinary enterprise, only they know about it. Our hosts used to take us to Indian restaurants when they wanted to treat. But that is another story.

To go back to "French fries," I myself suggested that banana strips might be a good substitute, if not better. I love bananas, particularly the kind we call "*saba*." I don't know how that's called in English, I've never been much good at agriculture, and can't even distinguish trees, to my eternal shame. To this day, I love fried bananas, or "*maruya*," and devour quantities of them wherever I can find them. I remember that when I was a kid our place had a version of it, which was banana strips mixed in batter and fried. We called it *kalingking*, if my 53-year-old memory serves. There were itinerant vendors aplenty in our street who hawked the stuff, and I do not romanticize when I say that they did not have to walk far to empty their baskets. It was paradise that sold for a song.

I don't know that fast-foods, which have had the most unsavory effect of killing the thriving *kakanin* industry (you find *kakanin* now largely in specialty stores, often in fancy wrapping) shouldn't make amends for that crime by introducing some of them in their fare. It should give a new generation of Filipinos quite literally a taste of their past.

But there's the rub. A great deal of "colonial mentality"—a complete misnomer, but one that has managed to survive the years: colonial mentality means imperialist mentality; what we really mean is colonized mentality—underlies our attitudes there. I remember how, when we were kids, our teachers would say when we couldn't answer questions, "Why don't you go home and plant camote?" The suggestion was also a derisive put-down of farmers, who were regarded as country bumpkins, the kind that descended on the city during fiestas, loud and uncouth.

I don't know that today's teachers still say, "Why don't you go home and plant camote?" to their unenlightened or befuddled wards, but I do know the low opinion about camote persists. It has slipped into the local lexicon surreptitiously, and quite insidiously, as when people say "*nangamote sa test*," in the case of students, or "*nangamote sa interview*," in the case of people applying for a job. Nobody has thought to say, "*namansanas sa report*" or "*nangapple sa panliligaw*."

The same is true of the banana, which is the pejorative adjective affixed to a republic that is going to the dogs (my apologies to dogs). We do not call it a cherry republic or an orange republic or a grape republic, we call it a banana republic. Which is no small irony, considering that what made many South American republics banana republics was the United Fruit Co. which turned vast tracks of land into plantations producing—what else?—bananas. But that is also another story.

If you can add spaghetti to local fast-food fare (I don't know if they still tell the joke about Filipinos in the United States ordering spaghetti at McDonald's), why on earth can you not add camote and banana to it as well? Why apple pie rather than guava pie?

I'm not fond of fast food to begin with, and cannot for the life of me imagine why many folks from the provinces announce with much pride that they now have a Jollibee or McDonald's as though that were the surest sign of the encroachment of civilization. But if a fast-food joint can offer camote and banana strips or indeed the whole gamut of local fruits, which are our pride and joy, in lieu of potatoes, I could be tempted to patronize it. In these days particularly, when money is so hard to come by and the dollar is battering the peso to a bloody pulp the way Manny Pacquiao did Fahsan 3K Battery in four rounds, I should think the advice would be:

Be wise: Do go home and plant camote.

Justice demanded

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

FIVE cases that came very recently to the public eye demand that justice be rendered with an even hand.

Former President Joseph Estrada, now recuperating from a knee-cap operation in Hong Kong, wants to be allowed to continue his recuperation at his Greenhills residence in San Juan. His lawyers argue that it's close to the Cardinal Santos Hospital in the event of a medical emergency. But the Sandiganbayan has denied his request, and instead is disposed to allowing him to recuperate at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center where he had previously been confined for medical problems. This is correct judgment by the court and won't be interpreted as undue leniency.

* * *

In the case of former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, some 50 members of the House of Representatives, mainly former colleagues of the imprisoned congressman from Mindanao, have called for a presidential pardon on account of his ailment. But human rights groups and other NGOs have objected to a pardon on the argument that this would single him out for a special favor due to his political connections. What about those ailing prisoners who are not similarly connected and have to languish in jail? they ask.

I would add my voice to those objecting to the idea. If Jalosjos is ailing, he ought to be allowed to seek medical attention and hospitalized even, but pardoning him at this time, when he hasn't even served one-fourth of his prison term, would be a grave injustice to his young victim.

* * *

Mary Ong, alias "Rosebud," has accused First Gentleman Mike Arroyo of "blocking" the P5-million compensation due her for her role in exposing the illegal drug activities of a former PNP group, involving then PAOCTF chief Panfilo Lacson and his key officers. I don't know whether there is any basis for the accusation made by Rosebud, who cites text messages from a Palace official to this effect. Such "evidence" won't hold water in court as they can be fabricated, even though Rosebud's story, like her testimony during the Senate hearings, are full of details involving a plethora of personalities. As with her previous testimony, this new one will be milked beyond its worth.

But if Rosebud hasn't received her agent's fees, then the government ought to pay her for her role as crucial witness, for which she risked life and welfare. Otherwise, who will trust the government? This is justice as well as good sense.

* * *

Justice, too, is demanded of government in its takeover of the Naia 3 facilities owned and constructed by Piatco. Pasay City RTC Judge Henrick Gingonon has ruled that if government is to take over Naia 3, it has to pay full compensation to Piatco, which claims it spent $563 million for it, with an initial payment of $64 million or about P3 billion. The court also ruled that pending full payment of compensation, the government cannot award concessions or lease any part of the airport to third parties. The government has said it would question this ruling, doubtless because an airport principally earns from the concessions, but Piatco is expected to fight back.

* * *

This is part of the difficulty a few commentators foresaw two years ago, when the administration, upon the advice of the arrogant Gloria Tan Climaco, decided to nullify Piatco's contract and set itself on the road to expropriation of Naia 3. Expropriation can be justified in the national interest, but this cannot be done without just compensation, otherwise this would be outright confiscation, something a democratic government doesn't do. But the government cannot give adequate compensation because it's broke, hence this unhealthy stalemate.

How I wish that two years ago the administration had harnessed its best negotiators and talked quietly with Piatco about the national imperative to operate that airport, instead of being confrontational and combative. After all, the administration was involved with the airport construction every step of the way since various agencies had given their imprimatur. Had it done so, perhaps the current mess could have been avoided.

* * *

Another issue that demands justice is the case of the 3.4 million coconut farmers and workers. The Sandiganbayan recently ruled with finality that the 27 percent San Miguel Corp. shares and 72 percent UCPB shares sequestered by the government in 1986 from Eduardo Cojuangco's group belong to the "coconut industry and its farmers." The coconut farmers' ownership is anchored on the fact that these shares were purchased with the coconut levy collected from them over 10 years during the Marcos era.

* * *

Former Philippine Coconut Authority chair and Quezon Rep. Oscar F. Santos wrote me that the Sandiganbayan "has raised the farmers' hopes that after almost 20 years of struggle, they may soon, during GMA's watch, benefit from the levy funds collected from them 30 or so years ago by decree." Santos lamented that many of the farmers who paid this levy have died and many more have grown old. To this day, they are awaiting fulfillment of the government's promise, made during the Marcos era, that the levy was "for the benefit of coconut farmers." Santos said he made an actual count of how many times that phrase appeared in various Marcos PDs imposing the levy, and found out that there were no less than 82 times. Until the farmers actually benefit from the levy, he said, "their situation will serve as a continuing indictment of our justice system." He added that "procedural matters, especially when abused and dilatory, must give way, as in this case, to substantive justice."

President Arroyo, whose goal of giving her poor countrymen a better deal cannot be doubted, must keep her vision clear: the coco levy funds to be derived from the Sandiganbayan's ruling must benefit the poor coconut farmers. She has to give them justice.

Poor helping poor

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WHEN the poor give to their fellow poor, they give of their very substance and, in so doing, become materially diminished in a way. There is the Filipino saying *"Isusubo na lang, ibinigay pa."* Roughly translated, what one is about to put into one's mouth, one gives up for someone more needy. Giving even if it hurts—literally. That is often said of mothers of impoverished families.

I am reminded of birds and other wildlife who hunt prey, masticate their catch and then regurgitate the partly digested stuff into the open mouths of their young. You see a lot of these magnificent images on wildlife TV. How literal, how from-the-gut this giving is. But we are not wildlife and, as humans, we go through a complicated, non-gut process in feeding others who are not our own.

Many who have much also give much, but they do not hurt as much or may not even hurt at all. Millions of pesos, hundreds of thousands, a few thousands—all that changes are the numbers, not the digits, in the givers' bank accounts and they may not even notice the change, much less feel it. They will not count the cost. They will still eat their favorite food, ride in one car at a time, fly first class. They are not diminished, nothing of their substance has been given up or taken away. Still, they are to be appreciated. Actress Sandra Bullock just donated $1 million to the tsunami victims.

But the poor also give. They may not count the cost, but they will certainly feel the cost.

Last week, at Christmastide, a group consisting of members of the Alay Kapwa Christian Communities went to the disaster-stricken towns of Real and Infanta in Quezon. I tagged along. They were women mostly, all coming from poor urban and rural communities served by the Good Shepherd Sisters. They brought with them a big jeepload of relief goods. Each bundle had the staples: rice, sugar, coffee, milk, canned goods, pieces of clothing.

Included too were packs of spaghetti and meat sauce which, I was told, were part of the Christmas "bundles of joy" that Alay Kapwa poor families had received from benefactors. Now they were giving them up to the more needy.

They even raised some P11,000 from their own pockets. They have been so lucky, they admitted. The late Sr. Christine Tan, whom we all missed during this trip, had poured out her life for them. They knew how well loved they were, now it was their turn to reach out.

We went in two vehicles that breezed through the zigzag until we reached that part in Real where the mountains had dumped mud, huge rocks, uprooted trees, logs and remains of homes in the last days of November. Already a month since the killer-landslides struck and road clearing was still going on.

How terrible indeed, the women said, to be poor, homeless, hungry and bereaved. Most of the time, while we were viewing the ruins, there was only awe and silence. If there was something here they wanted, the women said, it was the fresh mountain air along the way which city folks did not have. We should bring home mountain air in a bottle, someone quipped, and we all laughed.

Infanta was a wreck and groaning in the mud. Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona's residence (made mostly of bamboo) was a mess. Our shock was eased by our brief rest and lunch at the Carmelite monastery garden. This was not your regular monastery with grills and cloisters. This was a lovely contemplative community of nuns minus the formidable walls, attuned and open to the poor and to nature. That was how it was begun during the time of now retired Bishop Julio Labayen (himself a Carmelite). This is how it continues to be.

During lunch the nuns told us about the mountains roaring and how their place became a refuge for those who had to flee. Everything the nuns could lay their hands on they had to give away to the wet, cold, hungry and homeless. Frightened was an understatement.

The Alay Kapwa group had to decide whether to leave the bundles at the social action center for centralized distribution or hand them over themselves to residents of a barangay. The group opted for the latter, which was a more complicated process. They wanted to be skin to skin, they said, with their fellow poor even if briefly. So to Sitio Maypulot we went.

This was not their first time to reach out. When Mount Pinatubo erupted and buried portions of Central Luzon in lahar, the Alay Kapwa poor helped their fellow poor rebuild their homes. Their efforts were small and unnoticed. They only had their hearts and hands.

I am not romanticizing the poor here. They are not the easiest to work and live with, as the nuns might tell you, but the poor have their great moments and they, too, have shining spaces in their souls.

Our conversation often dwelled on the tsunami that struck the day after Christmas and claimed the lives of more than 150,000 people and brought sorrow to millions in Asia and parts of Africa.

Are we too busy with our own? Do we feel too small to help? I remember the series I wrote in 1998 on the overstaying Vietnamese refugees no rich nation of their choice wanted to take. The Philippines offered them citizenship and, with the help of the Catholic bishops, built them a permanent community in Palawan. Thank you, Philippines, the Vietnoys said. I wept.

We are a poor nation, but we are not a stingy people.

Help! Eager to help the tsunami victims but can't find a local fund campaign? Log on to www.unicef.org, www.ifrc.org or www.catholicrelief.org or contact pnrchq@redcross.org.ph. You can use your credit card. It's fast and easy. But shouldn't we do a *piso-piso* collection? If one billion of the six billion people on this planet would each give a dollar...

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Seas of our minds

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

FOR a people living in an archipelago, we seem to have a curiously detached attitude toward the sea. Few of us seem to love it. We may plunder it, viewing it as an irresistible treasury, a cornucopia which we can loot with impunity. The leisured class among us may view it with a hunter's affection, that curious mingling of bloodlust and aesthetic sensibility that moves the wealthy to tears when they recount their struggle to land a swordfish. The rest of us think of the sea as either a place to bring the family to for an afternoon or a weekend, where children can build sand castles while the menfolk guzzle beer, and women can bathe in the sea, as long as they are clad in our Catholic version of the purdah: large, loose T-shirt slipped over an equally modest bathing suit.

Our fellow citizens who make their living from the sea, do they, at least, love the sea from which they derive their livelihood? It seems they don't; it would be a curious love indeed that manifests itself in soft-drink bottles packed with dynamite, or slightly more sophisticated grenades that detonate on beds of coral, pulverizing the coral and providing a temporary bounty of stunned fishes. And yet one cannot be too outraged at fishermen who do this, for in the eyes of society, our supposedly egalitarian society which proclaims the virtue of hard work, fisherfolk are like peasants: essential beings, but not honored for it, and, indeed, despised for the darkness of their skin and their hard work which serves as a reproach to those who make millions through the manipulation of figures.

Can they, who are neglected by a government impotent to prevent the looting of our fishing waters by foreign trawlers, who are given little financial assistance and then viewed as subversives when they try to organize in defense of their rights, be expected to love the sea whose bounty seems reserved for foreigners and sportsmen? Hardly.

Still, the fact remains that between those who fish to provide our dinner tables with seafood and those who fish with cyanide to stock the aquariums of the world, the result is the irreversible destruction of our aquatic resources. Understanding why fishermen club dolphins to death, when all the dolphins want to do is frolic with them or merely feed themselves, and condoning the brutal liquidation of those most popular of marine mammals are two separate things. We must understand—but we must resist brutality, too. Then again emptied seas sometimes only yield up dolphins, the meat of which can be sold, but cheaply.

My memories of the sea seem so colorless compared to the memories of our elders. I have seen, from the deck of a liner heading out to sea from Manila Bay, the silhouette of Fort Drum, that island cocooned in concrete with its long-silenced naval guns, in the evening twilight. I have seen the sandy beaches of Sicogon, the whale sharks of Donsol, and enjoyed the sight of deadly lion fish in the beaches of Davao. The dark, oily waters of Manila Bay and the Cavite beaches we'd visit when I was a child. But everywhere, man's injuries to the sea have been evident. Soft-drink bottles, slippers, broken glass and rusting cans. And everywhere, plastic. Plastic in all shapes, sizes and for countless uses, mingled with fish, poisoned by the effluvia of freighters and noxious leaks from tankers. Sea life, where one can still see it, is accompanied everywhere by death or dying. The death of sea creatures at the hands of the more sadistic sort who fish for sport and harpoon for fun, the dying of scarred coral reefs and entire ecosystems.

My father remembers seeing giant clams. He had memories of steaming from island to island, and of their ship at anchor in the evenings, of watching sea snakes trying to slither up the sides of the ship, attracted by the light from the portholes. He can remember the sea when it was relatively clean, and flying fish were abundant. At home we have pictures of him, not even a teenager yet, on the deck of one of these ships, proudly displaying fish caught while at sea and beaming with innocent pride.

These photos today send shudders through friends who love the sea. They are a reminder of how things were, and the mentality which seemed harmless once upon a time, but which helped bring the alarming state of affairs of our country's seas.

An uncle remembers the (now) Aurora and Quezon Provinces of his youth, when people would set out in small boats to haul in tuna in such enormous quantities that boats were often in danger of being swamped. His memories are joyful ones: of abundance and community spirit.

The laughter of that generation will not be heard again, for those straits have long become ghostly expanses of emptiness. The tuna have long been fished out of the waters of his youth, and now only the merchant marines of more efficient states can catch tuna in abundance. But there is, too, the grisly, residual memory of the residents of Baler, Aurora, itself founded after the first settlement was destroyed by a tsunami in the 18th century.

The oceans of our memories are a catalogue of humanity's sins. Not only against the sea and its defenceless denizens, but against ourselves. I thought of this as I read articles remarking on how the tsunami's effects were worsened by the rampant destruction of coastal mangrove forests.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

A greater journey

AT AROUND two o'clock in the afternoon, our group of four set off for our apostolate in a far-flung barrio. Being used to hiking and confident after having conquered several high mountains, I underestimated the hike and thought it would be an easy one. "This should be no different," I said to myself. "This will be easier than my previous treks."

We began our journey under the searing heat of the summer sun. Barely 15 minutes later, I was already sweating profusely and almost gasping for breath. My bag felt heavier. I had brought along some unnecessary things. And this prompted me to reflect on the Gospel account where Jesus instructed his disciples to bring nothing as they went about their missionary work.

YOUNG BLOOD

Berlynden B. Dao-anis

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

While trying to sustain a good pace up the ridge, I continued to ponder on letting go and being simple. I realized that bringing too many things was one manifestation of my attachment to worldly possessions. I was reminded of the virtue of detachment and understood how difficult it was to be attached to so many things that only made life complicated. I wished I could go back to my childhood, when life seemed so simple and uncomplicated.

As I struggled to catch up with my companions who were already about half a kilometer ahead of me, I felt some irritation. I decided to walk faster. Then I thought about how life can be likened to an ordinary journey. Some people are way ahead and some just follow, even though everyone has the same destination. Life is a journey where some travelers are in front and others at the rear. But what really matters is the faith and trust we put in the Lord who always walks with His people. Everyone should just put his confidence in God, who guides and directs the way.

When I felt thirsty, I discovered that I had brought no water. This led me to think that amid nothingness, the only thing left to sustain someone in a journey is prayer. Yes, the greatest *baon* while one travels is prayer. It is the freshest water that quenches thirst and the finest bread that satisfies hunger.

So I prayed. I prayed that I would find a well where I could drink. After some time, a cluster of small nipa houses came into view. I saw my companions resting on the grassy part of the area. They were drinking cold water offered by the residents there. The people appeared wary, but they tried in their own little way to show their hospitality. One of our companions, a nun, started to distribute candies to the half-clothed children who surrounded us. It was an act that was so simple but meaningful—giving me some sort of nostalgia.

I remembered a time when I was a grubby boy. I was not conscious about how I should look. I had also been in a situation where I had only a shirt on and wore no slippers. I could hardly believe that I reached this far in my life since I come from a poor family, one that has to be contented with the simple and bare necessities of life. It is something of a miracle that I have survived. It is absolutely because of God that I have carried on. I thank Him for His providential care. God, indeed, intimately moves in the history of every person as well as community.

Life I believe is like that, too. There are times when one is down, but he has to stand up and walk. Life has its ups and downs. These are really part and parcel of the journey of life. The downs of life are inevitable. They make life more meaningful. True, these shadows of life also cause discouragement. Nonetheless, if they are faced as challenges and overcome, then one will grow stronger and can move on.

Having mustered enough strength after some sort of rest, I led the pack of hikers. We calculated that we would reach our destination early in the evening, about one and a half hour more of walking. This annoyed and at the same time challenged me. We still had a long way to go and it was beginning to grow dark.

A thick fog enveloped us as I thought about my earlier projection that we would reach our destination before it got dark. Challenged, I began to run though my feet were aching. I ran ahead of my companions. They had a flashlight while I plunged into the deepening darkness. I realized I was losing. I was caught in the middle of the dark. I could hardly see my way. I had reached a crossroads.

Disoriented and not knowing which way to go, I decided to wait for my companions. I sat and stared at the sky.

How difficult it is to be at a crossroads of which life has so many. We encounter minor "crossroads" in our daily life and major ones in the course of our life's journey. Thank God for the people He sends to help us decide what direction we should take. Thank God for bringing us to such circumstances. They allow us to reflect on our past journeys and how we have been living our lives.

When my companions arrived, we pushed forward on the final leg of our climb, making sure we were within sight of one another in the dark. Luckily we had a flashlight, without which we could not have reached our destination.

In life, Jesus is our light. Without Him we cannot reach our goal. Without Him we would be lost in the wilderness. Indeed, He is the light as we move along our path. He is our "flashlight" lighting the way especially during the nights of life.

After five hours of hiking, we finally reached the place. We were heartily welcomed by some mothers who had prepared food for us. It was so comforting to know that there were people eagerly waiting for us. They were so happy when we arrived. Our arrival became somewhat like an encounter of lovers who had not been together for a long time.

When you travel, isn't it wonderful to know you would soon be meeting your beloved? No matter how hard the journey, that is what makes you determined to move on.

Life is a journey toward the beloved. Life is a journey of a lover who is determined to cast aside all obstacles in his travel toward his loved one.

After three days of living with the people in the barrio, we hiked back to where we started, enriched by the experience and realizations we came upon during our sojourn. It was as if a new horizon had opened, leading us toward a greater journey called life.

Berlynden B. Dao-anis, 27, is a fourth year Theology student at the Immaculate Conception School of Theology in Vigan City.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

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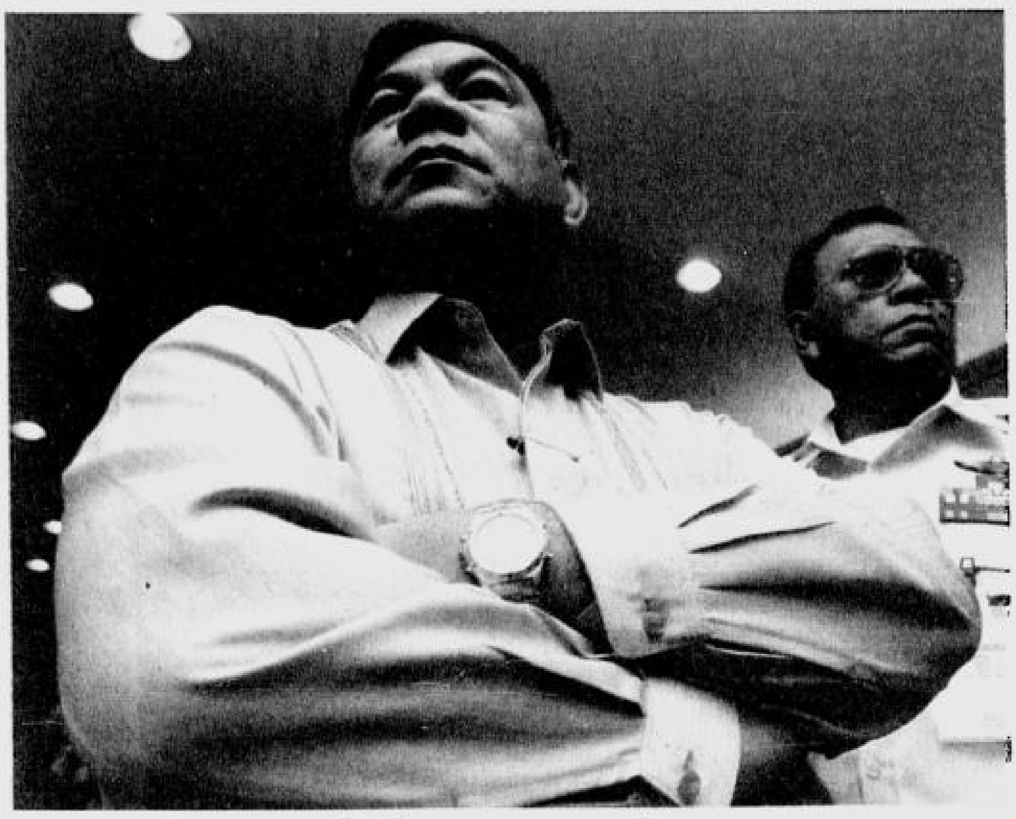

Starting with ourselves

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But corruption in the military is as widespread as in any sector of our national community. It thrives even in business, church groups and nongovernment organizations. Now who's left with clean hands? Search me.

We all need cleansing and let us start with ourselves, with or without that resolve from the President. It is not forthcoming. The early signals coming out of Malacañang are clear for anyone to see.

—GICO DAYANGHIRANG,
Davao City

Cry for genuine agrarian reform in Tarlac

WE appreciate Lt. Col. Preme F. Monta's admission that there is demoralization in the ranks of the Armed Forces of the Philippines because of accusations that it was their soldiers who killed Tarlac peasant leader Marcelino Beltran. (PDI, 12/20/04) May we point out that the citizenry is quick to accept such accusations because of the AFP's dismal record of human rights violations.

The Beltran killing is but the latest in a long chain of similar cases lodged against the military and police organizations since martial law. What the AFP can do, with the help of the police, is to identify and seriously prosecute the killers so that it can clear its name and belie the accusations.

Monta is wrong in saying that the killing "served as a platform upon which anti-military groups and individuals undermine the integrity and respectability" of the AFP. He is barking up the wrong tree and is speaking like the emperor who habitually beheaded the messengers of bad news.

For our part, as long as clear evidence is not presented, we hold the Cojuangco family, the Arroyo administration, the military and the police responsible for the death of the eighth martyr of the Hacienda Luisita massacre.

The mercenary record of the military in Tarlac as paid henchmen of the landed class stretches back to 1967, when they abducted and killed union leader Cecilio Sumat; 1982, when they did the same to four peasant organizers; and 1990, when peasant leaders Felix Dimitui and Joe Mesina Jr. were seized and murdered by soldiers.

The Cojuangco-Aquino clan and the military may have succeeded in killing a staunch advocate of genuine agrarian reform, but they cannot silence the rising voice of the Tarlaqueños and their supporters across the archipelago crying out for justice and genuine agrarian reform.

—EFREN REYES,
spokesperson,
Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Tarlac,
Sitio Buno,
Matatalaib, Tarlac City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

BWC clarifies role in BGC

THIS has reference to the article of Vic Agustin titled "Fort's water woes." (PDI, 12/3/04)

To enlighten Agustin and INQUIRER's valuable readers, here are some facts about the water and wastewater services in the Bonifacio Global City (BGC):

1. Bonifacio Water Corp. (BWC), a joint venture company composed of Veolia Water Philippines, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC), and Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) provides the water and wastewater services in the BGC.

2. BWC delivers water to its customers like Market, Market only up to their boundary meters. It is the customers themselves that operate and maintain the water network inside their respective establishments. Thus, the distribution of water and the issuance of billing statements to the individual tenants within an establishment are not the responsibility of BWC. In the case of our customer Market, Market, it is the building administrator of Market, Market that prepares and issues the water bills to the tenants.

3. BWC's current tariff to Market, Market and all commercial customers in the BGC is P62.10 per cubic meter for water and wastewater services, a rate that gives value for money considering the high quality service that BWC provides.

4. BWC is not aware of the volume of water consumed by the tenant referred to in Agustin's column, or of the basis of Market, Market's billing statement. However, on the basis of our current tariff, the P38,000 monthly water bill corresponds to about 600 cubic meters, the combined consumption of about 10 units. Any complaint or request for clarification should thus be addressed to Market, Market's building administrator.

—MA. ELISA G. VALENCIA,
customer care manager,
Bonifacio Water Corp.,
38th Drive University District,
Bonifacio Global City,
Taguig City

Proletarian way

IN THE DEC. 7, 2004 issue of Ang Bayan, the official paper of the Communist Party of the Philippines (published by its Central Committee), there is a diagram of the so-called "counter-revolutionary groups" and their links with "Trotskyists" and Social Democrats.

The diagram, prepared by the CPP's Department of International Work, reeks of the old sectarian shenanigans espoused up to this day by the thoroughly sectarian and Maoist CPP. The counter-revolutionary tag given to other groups restores the Stalinist hysteria.

I myself have been critical of some major tenets of Trotsky's ideas (such as the concept of a "Permanent Revolution," as opposed to Lenin's two-stage theory of continuing revolution), but I will not go down the blind path of attacking Trotsky as counter-revolutionary and distorting his role in the Russian revolution, as this falls into the Stalinist claptrap of character assassination and the likes, which were aimed at hiding the bureaucratization of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) under Stalin's helm.

The CPP's level of sectarianism is staggering, and also dangerous. Imagine isolating itself from different international political currents, especially some of the major international revolutionary currents coming from the Trotskyist traditions. Whatever differences we have with these groups, it will be totally sectarian to lump them all as counter-revolutionaries.

The CPP's framework of accusing people as counter-revolutionaries means they can be fair game for assassination. This is the same label CPP used in assassinating Rolly Kintanar and Arturo Tabara. Now, there are more of us in the list.

Killings, violence and thuggery are the classic Stalinist methods of "resolving" differences in the workers' movement. During the time of Marx, Engels and Lenin, all political differences—including those with the reformists and social democrats—had to be resolved through political means. This was and is the proletarian way that should be upheld by all revolutionaries.

—SONNY MELENCIO,
vice chair,
Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP),
47-A Masikap St.,
Diliman, Quezon City

No survey on Roces' tirade

THIS refers to the news article "ABS-CBN survey says public agrees with Susan." (PDI, 12/18/04) The story stated that dzMM received 45 pages of text messages reacting to Roces' interview with Karen Davila on "TV Patrol World," and that "an overwhelming 98 percent, or practically all texters, agreed with Roces' criticism of ABS-CBN.

The station manager of dzMM, Angelo Palmones, categorically denies that a survey was conducted a day after that live interview. Though it is true that dzMM did get text messages from the listeners at that time through "dzMM React," these were mostly positive feedbacks on the way "TV Patrol World" handled the incident. The radio station's texting component, first and foremost, is done on a regular basis as a way of interacting with the listeners. The text messages dzMM received after that interview with Roces were not in any way part of an official survey.

The INQUIRER's report merely relied on second-sourcing and no verification was made on the so-called survey; it did not live up to the newspaper's slogan, "Balanced News, Fearless Views."

The following day, Dec. 19, your newspaper carried a front-page photo caption, "Just between kings," which insinuated once again that our network pressured Dolphy into switching political allegiance during the elections. ABS-CBN never influenced any of its talents or employees into abandoning or supporting a candidate in the last presidential elections. We had made this clear in the official statement we issued to your newspaper on March 24, 2004.

At this point, when practically the whole nation faces serious challenges and setbacks, we hope that the INQUIRER will be more objective, accurate and sensitive regarding the issues it presents to the public, especially those concerning Fernando Poe Jr.

—MALOLI ESPINOSA-MANALASTAS,
vice president,
Government, Corporate Affairs and Public Relations,
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.,
Sgt. EA Esguerra Avenue cor. Mother Ignacia Street,
Quezon City

Cunanan's quarterbacking

THIS refers to Belinda Olivares-Cunanan's column last Dec. 6, 2004 where she made sweeping and unfair allegations virtually accusing Sen. Edgardo Angara and his family of coddling illegal loggers. Cunanan's piece is typical Monday-morning quarterbacking (for the administration?) and finger-pointing that opinion-makers love to indulge in each time a disaster comes our way.

Cunanan alluded to a member of the Sigma Rho fraternity, to which Angara belongs, as one of the loggers operating in Aurora and Quezon. Assuming this is true, shouldn't we first determine whether the Sigma Rhoan violated any provisions of the logging concession granted to his company before castigating him?

Suddenly, all loggers, legal and illegal, are lumped together as one of a kind, and commercial logging has become a heinous crime overnight. But wasn't commercial logging allowed by the government weeks before? Pending the result of a thorough investigation on who really were responsible for the wanton destruction of the forests, it is best for opinion-makers like Cunanan to be more circumspect in their accusations or insinuations.

And assuming the Sigma Rhoan logger is eventually found guilty of destroying our forests, why should Angara be dragged into the case? Simply because they are fraternity brothers?

Cunanan argued that the Angaras cannot escape blame for the devastation that struck Aurora "for the simple reason that nothing happens there without their knowing it." But isn't it the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that grants logging concessions and oversees the protection of our environment? Cunanan puts the blame on the Angaras but exonerates her friend, former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez, one of those who should be made to explain for the denudation of our forests.

Cunanan wrote: "Warnings about the impending disaster in Aurora and northern Quezon came from various quarters, but it seems they went largely unheeded." If such was the case, it's the executive department, the DENR, in particular, that is solely to blame. It is apparent that Cunanan's piece was a malicious move to discredit the Angaras.

I am neither a friend nor supporter of Senator Angara, but I would like to think that he is a decent man with a sterling public record and that he will not allow friends or fraternity brothers to denude our forests just so they can contribute to his campaign coffers.

—JOSIE PEREDA,
11 8th St., Zone 1,
Signal Village, Taguig City

Ludicrous

"POLITICS of grief " (PDI, 12/17/04) was probably the most hypocritical editorial that I have ever read: "to unite a severely fragmented nation."

There is no unity here. The rift between the poor and the hypocritical elite is still very much around. Fernando Poe Jr.'s camp is just too civil and gracious to let this show right now. "They grabbed the wreath, tore it apart, crushed the flowers, trampled the foliage and cursed the name of the President, accusing her of robbing Poe of his victory last May 10."

What more can you say to that? That is exactly how FPJ's supporters felt. The hypocritical wreaths had no place among the thousands of sincere messages of love. Don't even try to link the opposition with the Marcos era. Even though Imee Marcos is one of them. The opposition is just using what they have to counter the massive cheating perpetrated during the elections.

Okay, screw the ballots but, maybe, we should have let everyone who went to FPJ's wake sign an affidavit that he or she voted for him. There even might have been some people there from Cebu where Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo won by an unprecedented 1 million votes—which is ludicrous. Anyway, that's what I think about your editorial.

—FERNANDO VALDEZ,
bullseye@yahoo.com

Me, male 'Mama'

HIGH BLOOD

Dante C. Argañoza

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

RAISING children is not easy. It can be a most challenging work—especially for a single male, more so, when the children are not his.

Nevertheless, I accepted the challenge of motherhood early in life, and I can say truly in my heart that raising children can be very fulfilling indeed.

I have five children. They love me as they would have loved their own mother in much the same way that I love them like my own dear children. Our love for one another is one that is obviously very mutual.

Needless to say, I am playing a dual role—that of a father and a mother, and I am dead sure I love every minute of it. I cannot describe or explain the pleasure of this very rewarding experience.

They came into my life as very young kids. And I took care of them. Today, I still send three of them to school; the first two have finished college and are now working abroad.

Eva was entrusted to me by a relative. He was then in the military service, assigned to Mindanao. He had found a baby girl all by herself, in a war zone, crying her heart out to no one. Maybe, her parents had died in a crossfire, he thought. After diligent efforts to find her relatives failed, he decided to take her home. But being a family man himself with several children, he could not afford to have one more mouth to feed. I was at first hesitant because of my job, but the "maternal" instinct in me prevailed and I accepted her, rearing her like my real daughter. I named her Eva.

Not long after, another relative found an abandoned baby girl. He also left the baby with me—albeit on a temporary arrangement—while he searched for her parents and relatives. When he couldn't find them, he decided to turn over the baby to the local social welfare office. But the little girl would have none of it; she had found a playmate in Eva and was bent on staying with us. I had her baptized Maria Corazon.

Thus began my full-time parenting. I sent both of them to school, took care of them like a real "mother" should. I saw them grow up into two young ladies. And they showered me with the respect and love due a real mother.

Eva took up Psychology and is now happily based in the United States with a good job. Maria Corazon finished Nursing and, soon after, left for Canada where she now works. How I miss both of them. Now I only have nostalgic memories of them when they were babies.

The other three are actually my brother's children. He passed away when they were very young; and I took it upon myself to take them into my parental care. Marion King, called "Bunsoy" for short, is now 15 and in his junior year in high school. He is still not certain what to take up in college, although he talks of college life quite often nowadays. A very fine young boy—tall and handsome—he reads a lot on mythology, science and the like. We also talk about many topics. We even discuss Humanities, the subject I have been teaching in college for many years.

Mabel Dantean is 14 and is getting to be a very pretty young girl. She towers over other girls of her age. She likes to play the flute and other musical instruments, but I wish she'd learn how to sing. "Then, send me to a voice school," she had dared me, and come summer, I am just about to do that. Mark Kenneth, fondly called "Bolong," is only 12 and is just into dreams, just dreams, for now.

I really did not know how Maria Corazon and Eva turned from girls to women. Perhaps, they just kept it to themselves. It was different with Mabel who had a terrible stomachache when she had her first monthly period. I was at a loss what to do. I thought of rushing her to a hospital, except that a female relation told me to take it easy: it was just dysmenorrhea, which is quite very common among females, and a tablet of Midol would solve the "mess." So, that was it, some lesson for a male mother.

Eva, Maria Corazon, Bunsoy, Mabel and Bolong. They are the "loves "of my life. They have been my inspiration. They are the ones who have kept me—and still keeps me—going.

There certainly had been many trials, but on the whole, there had been more fulfilling moments. Sometimes, the weather is very hot and I don't feel like going to work, but I have to—to finance our needs and the needs are growing as the years fly.

There were instances when it would be raining hard and I'd find out that I do not have an umbrella and the streets are flooded, and it is still a long, long way from work in Manila to home in Bulacan. But I would go, eager to reach home because my "babies" are there and they are looking forward to my coming home. My meal would be ready and they would have stories to tell about school and their friends.

Many times I had to take them to the doctors for their regular, well—baby check up. There were those times when they had to be confined and I had to keep watch and start worrying where to get the money to finance their hospitalization. But God has always been very good. I have a good job; and I have very supportive siblings—one is in America and she has a wonderful job and knowing my predicament, she would come to the rescue when needed. God bless her soul.

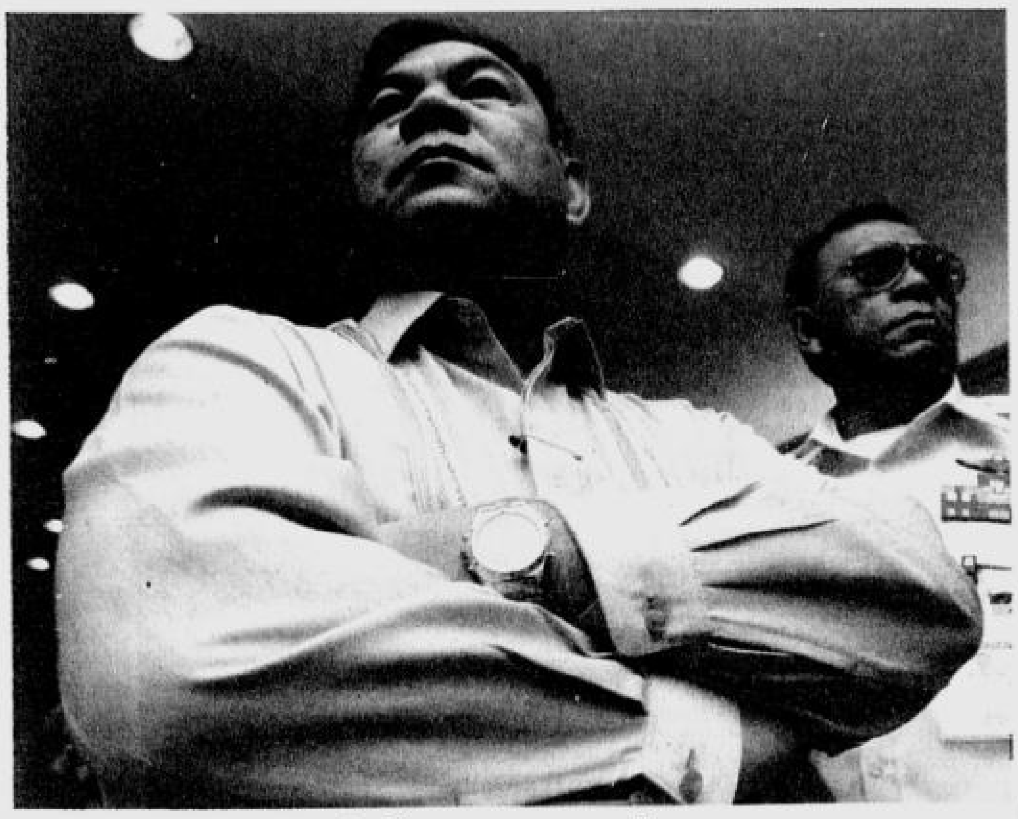
I had also experienced the boundless joy of pinning on them medals of honor, (nightly, I take time out to help them with their homeworks) attending parent-teachers associations, getting their cards, and preparing their daily *"baon."* I likewise have gone through wonderful times bringing them to the zoo, to the mall, to the church for their first communion, to art exhibits, even to concerts, to just about anywhere that would add to the education they are getting in school. I cannot remember the many birthday parties they had celebrated year after year after year. Since I am a camera buff, I captured all those moments with glee in my camera, and it is such a beautiful experience reliving those great moments going through the photographs.

I was the one who first taught them the alphabets and numbers, how to read and write. I brought them to school on their first day of classes. Today, I still tell them stories about life. I have encouraged them to study well, offering as models my first two "babies" who have finished their studies and now have good jobs.

Bunsoy, Mabel and Bolong miss their two *"ates"* as terribly as I do. They believe they are real siblings because I made them think so. I have never seen them jealous of one another.

Given the chance to go through life again, I would not hesitate living the kind of life I am living now, with five wonderful children raised as my own, forever my loves and my life.

Dante C. Argañoza, 60, is a college professor and cultural worker.



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—GICO DAYANGHIRANG,
Davao City

Cry for genuine agrarian reform in Tarlac

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—EFREN REYES,
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Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Tarlac,
Sitio Buno,
Matatalaib, Tarlac City

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BWC clarifies role in BGC

THIS has reference to the article of Vic Agustin titled "Fort's water woes." (PDI, 12/3/04)

To enlighten Agustin and INQUIRER's valuable readers, here are some facts about the water and wastewater services in the Bonifacio Global City (BGC):

1. Bonifacio Water Corp. (BWC), a joint venture company composed of Veolia Water Philippines, Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC), and Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) provides the water and wastewater services in the BGC.

2. BWC delivers water to its customers like Market, Market only up to their boundary meters. It is the customers themselves that operate and maintain the water network inside their respective establishments. Thus, the distribution of water and the issuance of billing statements to the individual tenants within an establishment are not the responsibility of BWC. In the case of our customer Market, Market, it is the building administrator of Market, Market that prepares and issues the water bills to the tenants.

3. BWC's current tariff to Market, Market and all commercial customers in the BGC is P62.10 per cubic meter for water and wastewater services, a rate that gives value for money considering the high quality service that BWC provides.

4. BWC is not aware of the volume of water consumed by the tenant referred to in Agustin's column, or of the basis of Market, Market's billing statement. However, on the basis of our current tariff, the P38,000 monthly water bill corresponds to about 600 cubic meters, the combined consumption of about 10 units. Any complaint or request for clarification should thus be addressed to Market, Market's building administrator.

—MA. ELISA G. VALENCIA,
customer care manager,
Bonifacio Water Corp.,
38th Drive University District,
Bonifacio Global City,
Taguig City

Proletarian way

IN THE DEC. 7, 2004 issue of Ang Bayan, the official paper of the Communist Party of the Philippines (published by its Central Committee), there is a diagram of the so-called "counter-revolutionary groups" and their links with "Trotskyists" and Social Democrats.

The diagram, prepared by the CPP's Department of International Work, reeks of the old sectarian shenanigans espoused up to this day by the thoroughly sectarian and Maoist CPP. The counter-revolutionary tag given to other groups restores the Stalinist hysteria.

I myself have been critical of some major tenets of Trotsky's ideas (such as the concept of a "Permanent Revolution," as opposed to Lenin's two-stage theory of continuing revolution), but I will not go down the blind path of attacking Trotsky as counter-revolutionary and distorting his role in the Russian revolution, as this falls into the Stalinist claptrap of character assassination and the likes, which were aimed at hiding the bureaucratization of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) under Stalin's helm.

The CPP's level of sectarianism is staggering, and also dangerous. Imagine isolating itself from different international political currents, especially some of the major international revolutionary currents coming from the Trotskyist traditions. Whatever differences we have with these groups, it will be totally sectarian to lump them all as counter-revolutionaries.

The CPP's framework of accusing people as counter-revolutionaries means they can be fair game for assassination. This is the same label CPP used in assassinating Rolly Kintanar and Arturo Tabara. Now, there are more of us in the list.

Killings, violence and thuggery are the classic Stalinist methods of "resolving" differences in the workers' movement. During the time of Marx, Engels and Lenin, all political differences—including those with the reformists and social democrats—had to be resolved through political means. This was and is the proletarian way that should be upheld by all revolutionaries.

—SONNY MELENCIO,
vice chair,
Bukluran ng Manggagawang
Pilipino (BMP),
47-A Masikap St.,
Diliman, Quezon City

No survey on Roces' tirade

THIS refers to the news article "ABS-CBN survey says public agrees with Susan." (PDI, 12/18/04) The story stated that dzMM received 45 pages of text messages reacting to Roces' interview with Karen Davila on "TV Patrol World," and that "an overwhelming 98 percent, or practically all texters, agreed with Roces' criticism of ABS-CBN.

The station manager of dzMM, Angelo Palmones, categorically denies that a survey was conducted a day after that live interview. Though it is true that dzMM did get text messages from the listeners at that time through "dzMM React," these were mostly positive feedbacks on the way "TV Patrol World" handled the incident. The radio station's texting component, first and foremost, is done on a regular basis as a way of interacting with the listeners. The text messages dzMM received after that interview with Roces were not in any way part of an official survey.

The INQUIRER's report merely relied on second-sourcing and no verification was made on the so-called survey; it did not live up to the newspaper's slogan, "Balanced News, Fearless Views."

The following day, Dec. 19, your newspaper carried a front-page photo caption, "Just between kings," which insinuated once again that our network pressured Dolphy into switching political allegiance during the elections. ABS-CBN never influenced any of its talents or employees into abandoning or supporting a candidate in the last presidential elections. We had made this clear in the official statement we issued to your newspaper on March 24, 2004.

At this point, when practically the whole nation faces serious challenges and setbacks, we hope that the INQUIRER will be more objective, accurate and sensitive regarding the issues it presents to the public, especially those concerning Fernando Poe Jr.

—MALOLI ESPINOSA-MANALASTAS,
vice president,
Government, Corporate Affairs
and Public Relations,
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.,
Sgt. EA Esguerra Avenue cor.
Mother Ignacia Street,
Quezon City

Cunanan's quarterbacking

THIS refers to Belinda Olivares-Cunanan's column last Dec. 6, 2004 where she made sweeping and unfair allegations virtually accusing Sen. Edgardo Angara and his family of coddling illegal loggers. Cunanan's piece is typical Monday-morning quarterbacking (for the administration?) and finger-pointing that opinion-makers love to indulge in each time a disaster comes our way.

Cunanan alluded to a member of the Sigma Rho fraternity, to which Angara belongs, as one of the loggers operating in Aurora and Quezon. Assuming this is true, shouldn't we first determine whether the Sigma Rhoan violated any provisions of the logging concession granted to his company before castigating him?

Suddenly, all loggers, legal and illegal, are lumped together as one of a kind, and commercial logging has become a heinous crime overnight. But wasn't commercial logging allowed by the government weeks before? Pending the result of a thorough investigation on who really were responsible for the wanton destruction of the forests, it is best for opinion-makers like Cunanan to be more circumspect in their accusations or insinuations.

And assuming the Sigma Rhoan logger is eventually found guilty of destroying our forests, why should Angara be dragged into the case? Simply because they are fraternity brothers?

Cunanan argued that the Angaras cannot escape blame for the devastation that struck Aurora "for the simple reason that nothing happens there without their knowing it." But isn't it the Department of Environment and Natural Resources that grants logging concessions and oversees the protection of our environment? Cunanan puts the blame on the Angaras but exonerates her friend, former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez, one of those who should be made to explain for the denudation of our forests.

Cunanan wrote: "Warnings about the impending disaster in Aurora and northern Quezon came from various quarters, but it seems they went largely unheeded." If such was the case, it's the executive department, the DENR, in particular, that is solely to blame. It is apparent that Cunanan's piece was a malicious move to discredit the Angaras.

I am neither a friend nor supporter of Senator Angara, but I would like to think that he is a decent man with a sterling public record and that he will not allow friends or fraternity brothers to denude our forests just so they can contribute to his campaign coffers.

—JOSIE PEREDA,
11 8th St., Zone 1,
Signal Village, Taguig City

Ludicrous

"POLITICS of grief " (PDI, 12/17/04) was probably the most hypocritical editorial that I have ever read: "to unite a severely fragmented nation."

There is no unity here. The rift between the poor and the hypocritical elite is still very much around. Fernando Poe Jr.'s camp is just too civil and gracious to let this show right now. "They grabbed the wreath, tore it apart, crushed the flowers, trampled the foliage and cursed the name of the President, accusing her of robbing Poe of his victory last May 10."

What more can you say to that? That is exactly how FPJ's supporters felt. The hypocritical wreaths had no place among the thousands of sincere messages of love. Don't even try to link the opposition with the Marcos era. Even though Imee Marcos is one of them. The opposition is just using what they have to counter the massive cheating perpetrated during the elections.

Okay, screw the ballots but, maybe, we should have let everyone who went to FPJ's wake sign an affidavit that he or she voted for him. There even might have been some people there from Cebu where Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo won by an unprecedented 1 million votes—which is ludicrous. Anyway, that's what I think about your editorial.

—FERNANDO VALDEZ,
bullseye@yahoo.com

Me, male 'Mama'

HIGH BLOOD

Dante C. Argañoza

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

RAISING children is not easy. It can be a most challenging work—especially for a single male, more so, when the children are not his.

Nevertheless, I accepted the challenge of motherhood early in life, and I can say truly in my heart that raising children can be very fulfilling indeed.

I have five children. They love me as they would have loved their own mother in much the same way that I love them like my own dear children. Our love for one another is one that is obviously very mutual.

Needless to say, I am playing a dual role—that of a father and a mother, and I am dead sure I love every minute of it. I cannot describe or explain the pleasure of this very rewarding experience.

They came into my life as very young kids. And I took care of them. Today, I still send three of them to school; the first two have finished college and are now working abroad.

Eva was entrusted to me by a relative. He was then in the military service, assigned to Mindanao. He had found a baby girl all by herself, in a war zone, crying her heart out to no one. Maybe, her parents had died in a crossfire, he thought. After diligent efforts to find her relatives failed, he decided to take her home. But being a family man himself with several children, he could not afford to have one more mouth to feed. I was at first hesitant because of my job, but the "maternal" instinct in me prevailed and I accepted her, rearing her like my real daughter. I named her Eva.

Not long after, another relative found an abandoned baby girl. He also left the baby with me—albeit on a temporary arrangement—while he searched for her parents and relatives. When he couldn't find them, he decided to turn over the baby to the local social welfare office. But the little girl would have none of it; she had found a playmate in Eva and was bent on staying with us. I had her baptized Maria Corazon.

Thus began my full-time parenting. I sent both of them to school, took care of them like a real "mother" should. I saw them grow up into two young ladies. And they showered me with the respect and love due a real mother.

Eva took up Psychology and is now happily based in the United States with a good job. Maria Corazon finished Nursing and, soon after, left for Canada where she now works. How I miss both of them. Now I only have nostalgic memories of them when they were babies.

The other three are actually my brother's children. He passed away when they were very young; and I took it upon myself to take them into my parental care. Marion King, called "Bunsoy" for short, is now 15 and in his junior year in high school. He is still not certain what to take up in college, although he talks of college life quite often nowadays. A very fine young boy—tall and handsome—he reads a lot on mythology, science and the like. We also talk about many topics. We even discuss Humanities, the subject I have been teaching in college for many years.

Mabel Dantean is 14 and is getting to be a very pretty young girl. She towers over other girls of her age. She likes to play the flute and other musical instruments, but I wish she'd learn how to sing. "Then, send me to a voice school," she had dared me, and come summer, I am just about to do that. Mark Kenneth, fondly called "Bolong," is only 12 and is just into dreams, just dreams, for now.

I really did not know how Maria Corazon and Eva turned from girls to women. Perhaps, they just kept it to themselves. It was different with Mabel who had a terrible stomachache when she had her first monthly period. I was at a loss what to do. I thought of rushing her to a hospital, except that a female relation told me to take it easy: it was just dysmenorrhea, which is quite very common among females, and a tablet of Midol would solve the "mess." So, that was it, some lesson for a male mother.

Eva, Maria Corazon, Bunsoy, Mabel and Bolong. They are the "loves "of my life. They have been my inspiration. They are the ones who have kept me—and still keeps me—going.

There certainly had been many trials, but on the whole, there had been more fulfilling moments. Sometimes, the weather is very hot and I don't feel like going to work, but I have to—to finance our needs and the needs are growing as the years fly.

There were instances when it would be raining hard and I'd find out that I do not have an umbrella and the streets are flooded, and it is still a long, long way from work in Manila to home in Bulacan. But I would go, eager to reach home because my "babies" are there and they are looking forward to my coming home. My meal would be ready and they would have stories to tell about school and their friends.

Many times I had to take them to the doctors for their regular, well—baby check up. There were those times when they had to be confined and I had to keep watch and start worrying where to get the money to finance their hospitalization. But God has always been very good. I have a good job; and I have very supportive siblings—one is in America and she has a wonderful job and knowing my predicament, she would come to the rescue when needed. God bless her soul.

I had also experienced the boundless joy of pinning on them medals of honor, (nightly, I take time out to help them with their homeworks) attending parent-teachers associations, getting their cards, and preparing their daily "*baon*." I likewise have gone through wonderful times bringing them to the zoo, to the mall, to the church for their first communion, to art exhibits, even to concerts, to just about anywhere that would add to the education they are getting in school. I cannot remember the many birthday parties they had celebrated year after year after year. Since I am a camera buff, I captured all those moments with glee in my camera, and it is such a beautiful experience reliving those great moments going through the photographs.

I was the one who first taught them the alphabets and numbers, how to read and write. I brought them to school on their first day of classes. Today, I still tell them stories about life. I have encouraged them to study well, offering as models my first two "babies" who have finished their studies and now have good jobs.

Bunsoy, Mabel and Bolong miss their two "*ates*" as terribly as I do. They believe they are real siblings because I made them think so. I have never seen them jealous of one another.

Given the chance to go through life again, I would not hesitate living the kind of life I am living now, with five wonderful children raised as my own, forever my loves and my life.

Dante C. Argañoza, 60, is a college professor and cultural worker.

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2 cops among 6 slain Bulacan rob suspects

STA. MARIA, Bulacan—Six robbery suspects, including two lawmen, were killed on Wednesday when they shot it out with policemen here, police said.

Chief Supt. Rowland Albano, Central Luzon police director, said two of the suspects were killed in Barangay Sta. Clara while the rest were gunned down in Barangay Guyong. A seventh suspect escaped.

Albano said the suspects, reportedly members of the Waray Waray group and led by a Metro Manila policeman, were about to rob the Sta. Maria Rural Bank at 10:30 a.m. when a policeman who was then depositing money sensed something wrong.

A siren from the car of a motorist who was irked by slow traffic outside the bank caused the robbers to panic and flee, Albano said.

He said policemen in the area pursued the suspects who were aboard a Toyota Corolla car and a Kia Besta van.

Two of those killed were identified as PO1 Butch Felipe and his brother PO2 Reynaldo Felipe. Albano said they found police uniforms and IDs in the Toyota car.

The other suspects in the van traded shots with policemen in Guyong. Three of them—two men and a woman—died instantly while the fourth died in a hospital. *Carmela Reyes and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Cops hunting teeners for journalist's slaying

BAGUIO CITY—Police are hunting a group of teenagers in Kalinga for the Nov. 26, 2004 murder of a reporter there, a Cordillera police official said yesterday.

Chief Supt. Jesus Versoza, Cordillera police director, said a 16-year-old suspect admitted to helping kill Stephen Omaois, 24, a reporter for the Guru Press based in Tabuk, Kalinga.

His confession led police to another suspect, an 18-year-old Tabuk resident on Tuesday night, said Senior Supt. James Dogao, Kalinga police director.

Four more teenagers are now in hiding, including 19-year-old Reynante Padrigo.

The 16-year-old told the INQUIRER that he and his friends dared each other to "kill the first person we meet" during a drinking spree at the Bagageo Videoke Bar in Tabuk.

He said the group saw Omaois walking alone on the main road. He said Omaois offered to have sex with the teenagers. They proceeded to a forested park near the Tabuk National High School, where they killed Omaois, he said.

Omaois' naked body was recovered under a heap of dried leaves on a lot near the school on Dec. 1. The victim was reported missing by his relatives on Nov. 26.

Alfred Dizon, Omaois' former employer at the Baguio-based Northern Philippine Times, said in a press briefing that Omaois resigned from the Times three weeks before he was reported missing "due to fears that he was under surveillance."

Dogao said the confession made by the two detained suspects discounted a work-related angle in the murder. "I cannot understand why these murderers are so young," Versoza said.

But the 16-year-old, who turned state witness, was arrested on Dec. 20 for the murder of a Kalinga woman.

"We were drunk. It was a (dare). But I didn't know they would really do it," he said.

He said Omaois led the teenagers to the park and proceeded to take off his clothes but he changed his mind.

He said Omaois asked the teenagers to join him in a secluded place where they would first drink wine.

Padrigo was "offended" by Omaois' hesitation and struck him with a rock. "The group left Omaois face down on the ground," according to a police report.

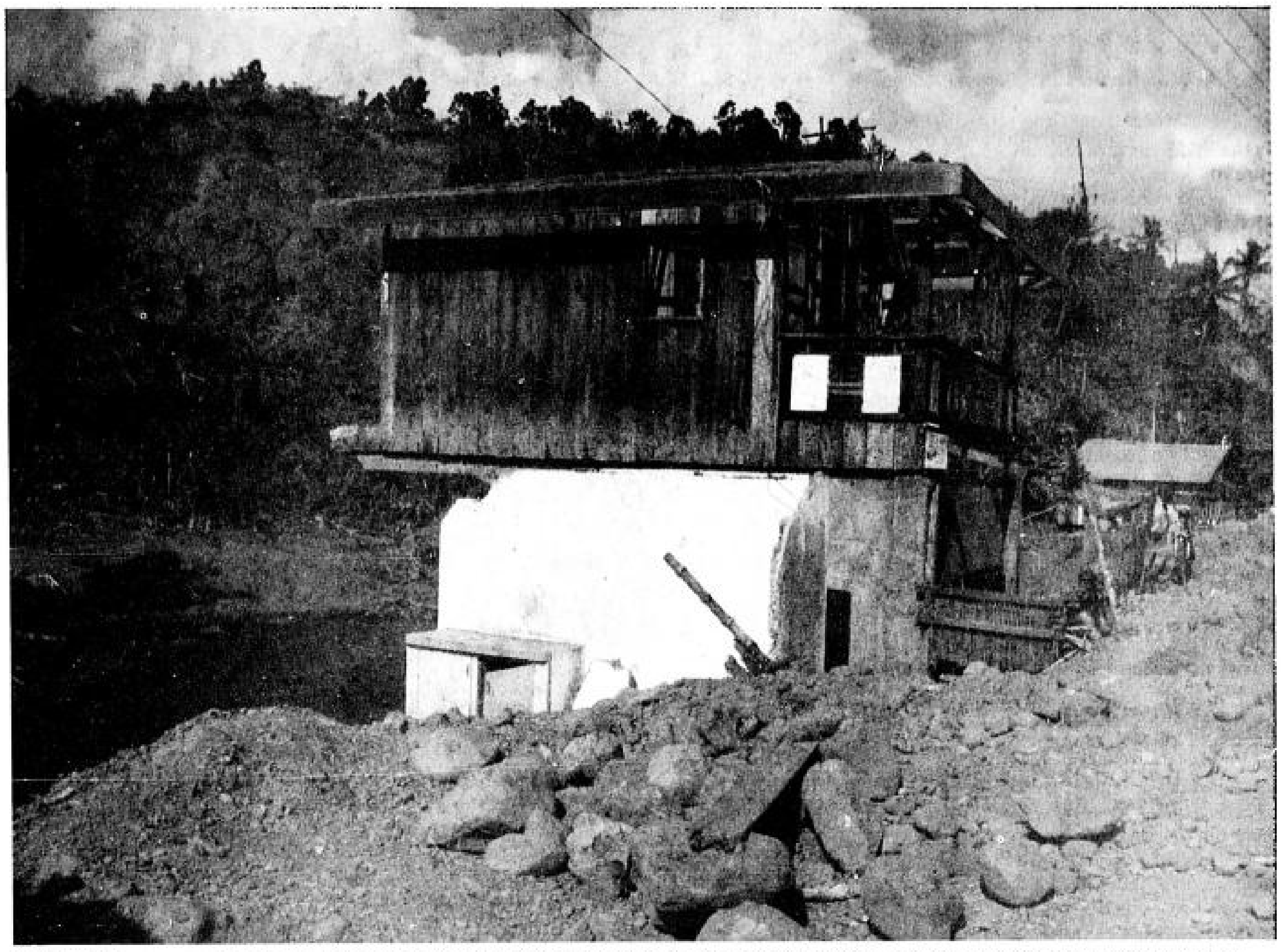
The state witness said he learned about the details from members of the group, who ran to his house.

The boy's sister confirmed that the teenagers changed clothes at her house "because she washed the bloodied items herself," said Versoza.

But they returned to the murder scene because Padrigo dropped his wristwatch.

The witness said Omaois was then still alive, so everyone took turns bashing his head with rocks.

"I was the last to hit him on the head," the witness said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



A HOUSE hangs precariously on a foundation which was all that was left of a bridge that was destroyed when floods and landslides hit Real, Quezon.

DELFIN MALLARI/PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Over 300 logging cases getting stale in courts

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Prosecutors and judges in Central Luzon have been slow in acting on cases involving illegal loggers and their cohorts, reports showed.

Out of the 360 forestry cases filed since 1995, only five cases ended in conviction in 2004, data gathered from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources here showed.

Only a regional trial court in Malolos, Bulacan, convicted nine illegal loggers in October last year.

"Very slow," was how Ricardo Calderon, chief of the DENR regional forestry division, described the grind of environmental justice in the region.

Of the 360 cases, only 33 are on trial in municipal and regional courts. Most are in the preliminary investigation stage. Others have been pending for half a decade.

Some cases were dismissed even without the benefit of hearings, according to Rafael Otic, former environment and natural resources officer in Nueva Ecija, which lodged the highest number of cases at 173.

"Our forest rangers and environment personnel put their lives on the line during operations. We've dealt with mobs of people protecting illegal loggers or benefiting from the racket. The work does not end there. It gets clogged in the court," he said.

Prosecution, according to Regidor de Leon, DENR regional executive director, requires the patience of Sisyphus, the mythical Greek god. At least four cases had been resolved due to lack of evidence, the reports showed.

In two cases, the offenders recovered illegally cut logs or trucks carrying them or both.

Bataan had filed 57 cases; Tarlac and Bulacan, 44 each; Zambales, 30; and Pampanga, 12. Copies of forestry cases filed in Aurora were not available.

Two reasons were cited why it took long to put illegal loggers behind bars, said Calderon. First, the case loads of prosecutors and judges were too many, at times reaching numbers by the hundreds. Second, the DENR had only one legal officer.

"We need private lawyers (to assist us in the cases) but the law does not allow us to do that," Calderon said. The DENR has no quasi-courts, unlike the Department of Land Reform that has adjudication boards to resolve land disputes.

The forestry law itself, Presidential Decree 705 and its amended version, Executive Order No. 277 signed by former President Corazon Aquino, allow bail for offenders.

"It's easy for them to post bail because their financiers are rich," Otic said.

On the heels of the landslides that battered Nueva Ecija, Aurora and Quezon, legislators considered filing a bill making illegal logging a heinous crime. Much of the lumber are poached from the Sierra Madre mountain range via routes in Cagayan, Isabela, Aurora, Nueva Ecija and Bulacan. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Court summons medical record of cult head in parricide

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Regional Trial Court yesterday ordered cult leader Ruben Ecleo Jr. and his doctor to submit a report on his health.

Judge Geraldine Econg issued the directive after Ecleo told the court that he might be unable to attend his two hearings this month because he was undergoing medical treatment in Manila.

The judge gave Ecleo and his physician, Cresente Boncaros, five days to submit the medical report to prove that he was indeed sick.

Econg told the INQUIRER that she had no intention to delay the hearings of the parricide case where Ecleo stands accused of killing his wife, Alona Bacolod-Ecleo, in January 2002.

The court earlier required Ecleo to attend the hearings, set on Jan. 28 and 29.

But Ecleo, "supreme master" of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association, submitted a one-page letter, informing the court that he might fail to go to Cebu because he was in Manila now undergoing further medical tests.

In his letter, Ecleo told Judge Econg that he was confined at the Miranda Family Hospital in Surigao City on Dec. 21 and 22 due to "angina pectoris," a medical term for chest pain.

Attached to the letter was a medical certificate dated Dec. 22, 2004 signed by Boncaros, Ecleo's doctor in Surigao City.

Ecleo was freed in April 2004 on a P1 million bail to enable him to seek medical treatment for his heart ailment.

His lawyer, Orlando Salatandre, said that since his release, Ecleo has been frequenting Manila for his medical treatment and check-up.

Although it was not sure if Ecleo would be able to attend his hearings, RTC Executive Judge Simeon Dumdum said he might send more security guards to the Chief Justice Marcelo Fernan Hall after receiving reports that some persons had separately approached Judge Econg about the Ecleo parricide case.

Dumdum said he would call a meeting among judges and administration officers to evaluate security at the courts.

He said Econg told him during a meeting of the judges that at least three women separately approached her in December.

The three women had one request to Econg—stop handling the case and allow the transfer of the case's hearings to Manila.

Econg said these women wore rings similar to those being worn by members of the PBMA.

"Judges, because of their position, get all sorts of approaches from different parties. We, judges, are bound by our oath. We have to be impartial and objective," Dumdum said.

Supt. Paul Labra, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Bureau, said he would request for a close-in bodyguard for Econg after she told him about the three women.

Labra said the judge was concerned about her security but she refused to have the incidents recorded in the police blotter.

"We told her to inform us immediately if she would be approached again," Labra said.

In October, lawyer Arbet Sta. Ana-Yongco, private prosecutor in the parricide case, was shot dead inside her home in Barangay Zapatera in this city.

Michel Favila, the alleged gunman and a PBMA member, is now facing charges for Yongco's murder.

DPWH to start less expensive road to North

THE GOVERNMENT is making sure motorists north of Metro Manila get an alternative road if they can not afford toll at the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx) that has gone up by 700 percent.

The NLEx boasts of world class convenience for motorists but it also raised by 700 percent the cost of using the expressway.

The Department of Public Works and Highways is paving the way for the MacArthur Highway widening project set to begin in May, as clearing of obstructions along the highway is already 70-percent complete, agency officials said.

Public Works Secretary Florante Soriquez, in a statement, said preparatory works for road widening were moving along as scheduled.

"We have so far been successful in jump-starting this project and we are continually monitoring ongoing works to ensure that delays do not occur," Soriquez said.

The MacArthur Highway Widening Project is one of seven high priority projects identified by President Macapagal-Arroyo as part of her plan to decongest Metro Manila by 2008.

Soriquez said a wider and improved MacArthur Highway will work hand-in-hand with the newly rehabilitated NLEx in easing traffic in the northern corridor.

The widening project costs P1.27 billion.

Church asks rich to donate land for relocation

INFANTA, Quezon—Leaders of the Catholic Church in northern Quezon are appealing to landowners to donate property to the thousands of homeless calamity victims as the government frantically searches for relocation sites for them.

"Thousands of homeless families are in need of new houses to rebuild their lives. It is an emergency. I now call on the big landowners to share their properties and donate them for the poor typhoon victims," said Bishop Julio Labayen, former head of the Prelature of Infanta, during the groundbreaking ceremony of the relocation project in Barangay Agos-Agos, this town, on Monday.

He added: "This crucial moment calls on everyone to sacrifice. We should not allow money matter to prevail."

Labayen noted that the poor typhoon victims had already lost everything they had—their loved ones, houses and pieces of property.

"They are pitiful," he said.

Bishop Rolando Tria Tirona, the head of the Prelature of Infanta, said donations of land as relocation sites for the homeless calamity victims would be a "very Christian gesture, especially in this kind of situation."

Quezon Rep. Rafael Nantes said they would continue to talk with owners of all possible relocation sites.

"We will persuade them to just donate their lands. Their compassion and generosity will be forever remembered by the people of northern Quezon," he said.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz, religious leaders, Quezon local officials and non-government organizations joined hands at the groundbreaking ceremony of the relocation site in a one-hectare land donated by the family of movie actor Onemig Bondoc.

Bondoc, whose family is into real estate, said they had allotted two hectares of land as possible relocation site but they could donate only one hectare.

"We will still discuss what we will do with the remaining hectare," he told the INQUIRER.

The actor admitted that the Bondoc family has a total of more than 50 hectares in the same area.

He said they would also "offer" the land to the local government as possible relocation site of the town hall, schools and for other purposes.

"We want to help the people of Infanta," Bondoc said.

But in the nearby town of General Nakar, Mayor Hernando Avellaneda was furious at the owners of the land that they had been targeting as a relocation site.

"The price tag of their land is too much. They no longer have a conscience," he said. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Calamities, troubles swept Southern Luzon

By the PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

YEARENDER

THE YEAR 2004 will be remembered for calamities that saw Nature fighting back against environmental destruction in Southern Luzon.

A deadly mix of logs and earth dislodged by heavy rain from the Sierra Madre mountain range, considered the last forest frontier in the country, buried communities and other areas in the towns of Real, Infanta and General Nakar in northern Quezon, shortly before midnight of Nov. 29.

More than 1,000 people were killed and several hundreds of others were missing after two tropical storms struck the area, triggering landslides and flash floods that recreated villages into a panorama of mud littered with bodies, mostly entombed in tons of debris, damaged roads and bridges, devastated farms and homes, and uprooted trees.

In Camarines Sur and Mindoro, several typhoons in the last quarter of 2004 left 35 people dead and hundreds of families homeless.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration was blamed for failing to issue warnings on time in the wake of Typhoon "Unding" in the last week of November.

Four survivors were found beneath the rubble of the collapsed Repador building that served as a short-lived haven for more than 100 people in one of the worst-hit villages in Real. They were rescued after a 10-day ordeal, clinging to a thin lifeline of water, songs and prayers but nourished with hope.

In Infanta, piles of bodies were shoved inside several apartment-type concrete tombs.

Raging currents from swollen rivers wiped out all the houses in the coastal villages of General Nakar. Water that cascaded from the slopes had transformed brooks into rushing rapids.

TWO CHILDREN from Sitio Maypulot, Barangay Maysikat in Infanta, Quezon, stand on a rice field now filled with mud that is slowly caking and becoming parched cracked earth. Somehow, some plants managed to shoot up. With irrigation dikes and rice fields destroyed, farmers are among those who will suffer the aftermath of the recent disaster that struck Quezon and several Luzon provinces. MA. CERES P. DOYO

Illegal logging

Rivers, hillsides and the long coastline of the Pacific Ocean that span the three towns were strewn with what many believed were remnants of illegally cut logs.

For the government, there is little doubt that massive illegal logging, that started in the 1950s, had caused the disaster.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources had admitted that 216,089 hectares of forest land in Quezon and Aurora are under logging concessions authorized by various agreements. Despite all these, its secretary, Michael Defensor, absolved the government-sanctioned logging operations from any responsibility in the disaster.

A ban on commercial logging in Quezon was proposed by several senators and a bishop in Infanta.

The calamity got world attention as relief goods and pledges of financial assistance poured in.

American troops were dispatched to help in relief operations in Nueva Ecija, Aurora and Quezon that were worst hit by three successive typhoons.

Countless heroes also rose from the tragedy and unselfishly served other people in distress, among them Fr. Charlito Collendrez of the Prelature of Infanta, who was swept away by flood while rescuing people.

Train mishap

On Nov. 12, a Philippine National Railways train, racing through the night from Bicol to Manila, jumped the tracks in Barangay Duhat of Padre Burgos town in Quezon province. Six passengers were killed and at least 150 others were injured in one of the worst crashes in the country's history of railway travel.

Investigators described the site of the accident as a dangerous bend with portions of the tracks in the area missing, having been stolen and sold for scrap.

The train sped on the curve at 70 km per hour, way above the imposed limit of 20 kph.

Mountain rehab

The past year also bannered the start of the five-year rehabilitation of mystical Mount Banahaw and Mt. San Cristobal in Quezon.

In March, members of the Protected Area Management Board and several environmentalists groups sealed off several trails leading to the bosom of Banahaw.

Despite all the unwelcome discoveries and unfortunate preceding events after the closure, environmental protection advocates described the mountain's temporary rest and rehabilitation efforts as a "timely dwell of hopes" for the stakeholders.

Environmentalists in Oriental Mindoro also proposed the rehabilitation of Mt. Halcon, the third highest mountain in the country, which has been threatened by fire, slash-and-burn farming, extraction of forest products, and unregulated mountaineering activities.

Their counterparts in Southern Tagalog have also made headway in efforts to save the seas off Quezon from further destruction. The Task Force Matatag, composed of environmentalists, police officers and inspectors from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, scored heavily against illegal fishers in Tayabas and Lamon Bay.

Electoral politics

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo won in Bicol but lost in Southern Tagalog in the presidential race in May. Raul Roco, the Bicolano aspirant, was a poor second in Bicol, eclipsing his election performance in 2001 when he garnered 97 percent of the region's votes.

Six Bicol governors reaffirmed and shifted party membership to Ms Arroyo's Lakas-NUCD, and junked Roco.

Traditional political clans dominated the gubernatorial and congressional races. But the Bicharas of Albay failed to sustain their bid in the gubernatorial race amid the emergence of the Gonzaleses of Ligao City.

Fernando Gonzales, the patriarch of a Spanish-descent family from Ligao, won over Alfonso Bichara, father of Al Francis Bichara, who bowed out from the gubernatorial position when his term ended in June.

In Albay, the Lagmans, Salcedas and Imperials retained their posts in their congressional districts.

Camarines Sur, for the first time, saw the political resurgence of the Villafuertes. Former Gov. Luis R. Villafuerte bowed out from office after three terms but passed on his 15-year reign in the provincial government to his son Luis Raymund Jr. and wrestled the congressional seat in the second district from Rep. Sulpicio Roco Jr., the presidential aspirant's younger brother.

The Fuentebellas, Andayas and Alfelors have kept their hold in their congressional districts.

In Sorsogon, the two dominant political clans—the Escuderos and the Lees—were uncontested in the first congressional district and provincial political scene.

Raul Lee was reelected governor and his wife Sally redeemed the mayoral post for the second time.

In the traditionally violence-marred elections in Masbate, Antonio Kho maintained dominance when he was reelected governor for a third and last term.

Da King

Ms Arroyo lost in Southern Tagalog by a wide margin to Fernando Poe Jr., although the movie actor staged only one campaign sortie in Laguna.

Violence marred the elections in Cavite. Supporters of rival mayoral candidates in Trece Martires City clashed six days before the polls. Five people died in that incident.

In Amadeo town, warring families also engaged in a shooting spree days before the elections that resulted in the killing of three people, including two police officers.

In Batangas, Ms Arroyo surprised political pundits when she endorsed the candidacy of then Sto. Tomas Mayor Armand Sanchez, who ran against her former justice secretary, Hernando Perez, in the gubernatorial race.

Sanchez, rumored as the chief operator of "jueteng" in Southern Tagalog, won over Perez, who ended up third.

Insurgency

Maj. Jose Broso, commander of the 2nd Armed Forces of the Philippines-Civil Relations Group and the Southern Luzon Unified Command spokesperson, said the communist-led New People's Army in Southern Luzon killed at least 65 persons and committed 147 acts of violence from January to Dec. 25 last year.

The NPA also committed 11 cases of kidnapping and abduction, 27 incidents of harassment, nine cases of ambuscade, seven raids on military and police detachments, seven cases of illegal confiscation of weapons, five ransacking incidents, four hacking incidents, four apprehensions, three sabotage activities, three arson incidents and two robbery-holdups, Broso said.

Two government soldiers were released by the NPA's Romulo Jallores Command in Camarines Sur.

The rebels caught national attention when they captured Lt. Butch Fidelino and Pfc. Rommel Nemeño on March 1 in a remote village during an ambush in Tinambac, Camarines Sur.

It took a series of negotiations within a five-month period before the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front finally set the date of release for Aug. 18, after the President ordered a stop to offensive military and police operations in Albay and Camarines Sur.

Labor

Maximo Lim, chief of the Department of Labor and Employment in the Calabarzon, said industrial peace continued in the region with a few labor strikes, especially inside the 21 economic zones.

But Luz Baculo, chair of the Pagkakaisa ng mga Manggagawa sa Timog Katagalugan, belied the declaration, saying 2004 was one of the worse years for workers and trade unions.

She said the recorded decline in labor strikes was brought about by "DOLE's manipulations" in classifying most strikes as illegal. She said union busting and wanton violations of labor laws were common. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Juan Escandor Jr. and Marlon Ramos*

83-year-old Mindoro woman lives on praying for the dead

By Madonna Virola
Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro

BRIGIDA Maula, 83, fondly called "Nanay Biding" by people in her community in Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro, has around 50 grandchildren, but she does not remember their names.

She can recite, though, the prayers for the dead, and she has established a name as a prayer leader for the departed, having assumed the role for the past 63 years.

"Sometimes, requests for prayer-leading come at the same time, like when there were three dead lying in the church," said the old woman's granddaughter Nila, 34. "Nanay Biding had to pray for the departed for about 30 minutes each."

Why her?

"Others could not memorize the prayers, especially those in Latin," said Nila, adding that she herself could not do it.

Nanay Biding's services extend to pouring water over a new-born baby before baptism and healing the sick, which she learned from her mother, a *hilot* (folk healer).

She has led the Apostolada (Apostles of Prayer), a religious organization, for 20 years. "There's no tiredness when you are many," she said. But Nanay Biding has accepted the fact that many of her contemporaries and friends have already left the group.

Even at her age, people, even in the far-flung barangays of Bulalacao, continue to invite her to lead prayers for the dead.

"It's hard for me to walk now so I only take offers from the poblacion. I already sit down as my knees easily get tired; sometimes I stumble," said Nanay Biding.

She often complains of dizziness, attributing it to tiredness and long walks. But when she was once fetched by a fellow Apostolada, she didn't waste time dressing up to attend a silver wedding anniversary in the church.

Joy of it

Nanay Biding was married to Juanito, a boat captain, at the age of 17 and they had five children. Three of the children are now dead.

When her husband died, the tips (from P20 to P200) she would get from praying helped support her family. "But she does not charge any amount," said town residents.

At her age, she has not lost her zest for life.

"She would have fun after praying with her *barkada* (group mates) and would drink two bottles of beer, dance and sing. She is a happy person. Sometimes, they'd go to the plaza to while the time away and have a party," said Nila.

Nanay Biding related with a broad smile that she once got distracted and forgot a line from the prayer. The line was "forgive the soul of the dead," but when she saw a Mangyan in a g-string sitting on a stair in the church, she instead said: "*Patawarin mo ang bahag ng Mangyan* (Please forgive the g-string of the Mangyan)."

Prayer bag

Nanay Biding keeps a small black bag, which contains all items she uses for praying—booklets titled "Katesismong Maikli o Dasalan at Tanungan ng Doctrina Cristiana ayon sa Katesismo ng Papa Pio X" (1929), "Purihin ang Panginoon," "Debosyon sa Mabathalang Awa," "Pagsisiyam sa Kamahalmahalang Puso ni Jesus" and "Ang Banal na Oras;" prayer leaflets of St. Therese of the Child Jesus, a black folding fan, two necklace rosaries, one bracelet rosary (which she finds more convenient to use), and a small white and laced veil.

She has a pair of eyeglasses, which she calls "*antyos*," but she doesn't use it. "It's heavy. Anyway, my eyes are still clear," she said.

Her grandson Inzo Maula said she miraculously recovered from a recent sickness.

Nanay Biding may not remember the names of all her grandchildren but certainly, she will never forget the requiem prayers that she has lived with until the rest of her life.

NANAY Biding has been praying for the dead for the past 63 years. MADONNA T. VIROLA

INQBOX Question of the Week
The recent earthquake and tsunami that resulted in over 155,000 deaths and injuries to countless others make me feel that life is__________.
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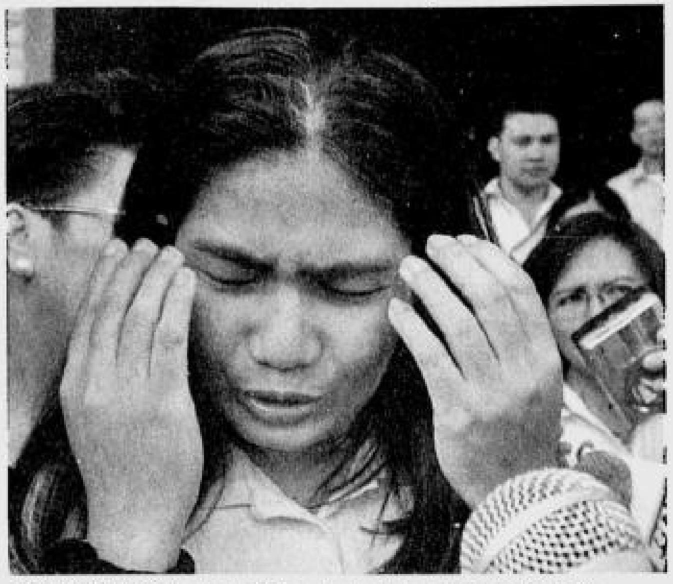
NIDA BLANCA SLAY

Building execs block reenactment

By Christian V. Esguerra



NEW WITNESS Andrada Dalandas breaks down after Atlanta Centre management refused to allow her and justice officials to enter the building.

JOAN BONDOC

NOT EVEN the justice secretary could convince administrators of the building where actress Nida Blanca was murdered to allow a reenactment.

Secretary Raul Gonzalez and company left the Atlanta Centre on Annapolis Street, San Juan, without staging the reenactment because of the refusal of the building management.

With Gonzales was new star witness Andrada Dalandas, her lawyer Harriet Demetriou, and National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

Dalandas, the prosecution's new hope in seeking the extradition and possible conviction of Blanca's American husband Rod Lauren Strunk, was to show how she purportedly witnessed the cold-blooded murder.

But the building management said Atlanta had had so much bad publicity since the killing, Gonzalez said.

"I told them (I was) the secretary of justice but they said that was the management policy," Gonzalez told reporters outside the building after meeting with the administrator.

Still, the management wanted a court order to which the justice secretary yielded.

"We will not trespass. This is private property. We'll just go back to the office and plan out what we will do," he recalled telling the building administrator.

A furious Demetriou said there was no "urgent necessity" for the NBI to re-investigate security guards assigned at Atlanta at the time of the murder.

Wycoco said the NBI would look into the possibility of suing Atlanta officials for "obstruction of justice."

Visibly frustrated, the witness broke into tears upon learning that building officials rejected the government's request for a reenactment.

"I want to show what I saw, what I witnessed inside the building but I didn't get the chance," she told reporters in Filipino. "I can't do anything about it anymore. I just want to leave this place! I don't want to be here anymore!"

In the sworn statement she executed following lengthy meetings with Gonzalez and Demetriou, Dalandas said she saw how Strunk, Philip Medel and another man beat up Blanca on the 6th floor parking lot of Atlanta.

Even if Dalandas failed to have the reenactment, Gonzalez said her statement won't change.

The justice secretary said a reenactment could happen as part of the trial proper.

Demetriou was particularly eager about the reenactment because of allegations that Dalandas was a "manufactured witness."

"I am very convinced with the truthfulness of her statements," said Demetriou, a former regional trial court judge. "I am putting not just my credibility but also my life on the line just to give her a chance to tell the truth to the public and to the court."

Later, Wycoco said the NBI would be talking to two other potential witnesses to support the testimony of Dalandas.

One of the potential witnesses is a woman who reportedly accompanied Dalandas to the Atlanta Centre on the day of Blanca's murder.

Wycoco said yesterday that Dalandas' companion, who was identified only as "Mariz" was set to be interviewed by NBI investigators. Mariz was expected to meet with NBI operatives yesterday.

Wycoco said the third possible witness was male but the NBI director refused to give any details.

"We would look for Mariz and get her statement to corroborate that of Angie (Dalandas)," Wycoco told reporters yesterday.

Mariz reportedly went with Dalandas to the Atlanta Centre on the day Blanca was killed.

Mariz reportedly left Dalandas, who was then working as a hospitality girl, on the sixth floor of the building where the latter was supposed to meet with a client.

Mariz was also the one who allegedly got in touch with clients and negotiated the fees.

After leaving Dalandas at the sixth floor, Mariz went to another floor and she did not see what Dalandas witnessed. *With Leila B. Salaverria*

But NBI sources said the statement of Mariz would help support Dalandas' story that she was at the Atlanta Centre at the time of the murder.

Dalandas earlier told investigators that while she was standing at the sixth floor parking lot, she saw four men get out of a van then carry a woman's body out of the vehicle.

She later identified three of the men as Strunk, Philip Medel and Mike Martinez.

Wycoco said he was "very convinced" by the statement of Dalandas.

World-class training for Makati policemen

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MAKATI policemen are all set to undergo world-class training from their American counterparts this month.

Officers of the San Francisco Police Department (SFD) in California will conduct a special training on police functions for members of the Makati Police Department as part of continuous efforts to professionalize the city's police force.

"Our police personnel will benefit from this training and gain greater expertise in the performance of their duties and responsibilities here in the country's premier financial center," Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay said. The trainers, members of an elite group of officers, mostly Filipino-Americans, will be headed by Lt. Eric Quema, the highest Filipino ranking SFPD police officer.

The officers, who will attend a global conference in Cebu later this month, will conduct the special training from Jan. 17 to 18 at the Silver Place Hotel in Makati City.

The group will share their expertise in various aspects of police work such as hostage/crisis negotiations, bank robberies, bomb threats and disposals, domestic violence and police/civilian relations, and crime scene investigation.

"The collaboration would strengthen linkages between our men and their US counterparts to keep our force abreast with world-class standards," Binay said. Construction has begun on the city's new police headquarters, patterned after the New York and Los Angeles police departments.

Painting hall proves to be costly lesson for 3 women

By Ruth L. Navarra

ALL THEY wanted was to have some fun.

But police were not amused when three women allegedly defaced a newly-painted barangay hall in Mandaluyong with caricatures yesterday.

Aiza Degala, 19, Lady Deliganzo, 20, and Kristine Villamil, 19, are now facing charges of malicious mischief, according to SPO4 Arnaldo Tarrayo.

Early stroll

A police report said that around 2 a.m. Benjamin Casiver, a barangay watchman of Brgy. Hulo, was making the rounds at Silva Park on Coronado Street when he spotted the three women.

The three ran way when he approached them, Casiver added.

After a brief chase, the watchman caught up with them in an alley.

Thinking it was not safe for the three to be out in the streets in the wee hours of the morning, Casiver decided to let the three stay overnight at the barangay hall.

Vandalized

When he returned at around 5 a.m. to check on the women, he saw that the suspects had vandalized the barangay hall.

"They drew faces on the newly-painted wall of the barangay hall," said Tarryo.

"They even splashed paint on a poster of Mayor Neptali 'Boyet' Gonzales," he added.

Manila tax increase challenged

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A MANILA congressman is challenging the legality of an ordinance that slaps higher taxes on real property in the city.

Rep. Jaime Lopez (2nd district), his nephew Manuel Lopez, and lawyer Reynaldo Aralar filed a civil case against Mayor Lito Atienza and the City Treasurer's Office for implementing an ordinance that increased real property tax assessment levels and doubled, at most, tax due from their owners.

This tax adjustment approved by the City Council should be declared unconstitutional and null and void, said Lopez in the suit filed the other day before the Manila Regional Trial Court (MRTC).

The special case, now on trial before the sala of MRTC Branch 25 Judge Aida Rangel-Roque, also sought a temporary restraining order and a preliminary injunction to prevent the city from implementing City Ordinance No. 8079 while the case was pending.

"This is not timely because the prices of basic commodities, electricity and water rates have all increased. They should just be implementing the old tax assessment levels," said Lopez over the phone.

The ordinance doubled tax assessment levels for some 250,000 commercial and residential properties in the city. The ordinance, the council said, was meant to enable the city to catch up with real property tax levels in other cities in the metropolis.

Lopez described the ordinance as unconscionable.

But Atienza shrugged off the latest suit against him as expected from the opposition.

"This is politically motivated. My lawyers are ready to answer that," said Atienza.

Oppressed might seek extreme justice

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

ON MARCH 19, 2002, in this column, I described Chief Insp. Miguelito Descalzo, now the deputy chief of police of Sta. Rosa, Laguna, as "the most abusive cop in my book." That's also the headline of that On Target column on that date.

Descalzo was harassing his neighbor, Rev. Albert Malaza, a Protestant minister, by stoning the latter's church which also served as his family's residence.

Why did Descalzo harass Malaza? He probably didn't want a Protestant church in his neighborhood.

Also, when Malaza moved into the neighborhood, his church compound, which he fenced in, ate up a big space. The space now occupied by Malaza's church used to be a terminal for Descalzo's tricycles.

What form of harassment did Malaza get from Descalzo? His house was stoned every night by the police chief inspector and some thugs, obviously drivers of Descalzo's tricycles.

In short, they wanted Malaza and his family to move out.

But Malaza has already established a modest congregation in the village-Phase I-A, San Lorenzo Village, Sta. Rosa, Laguna. He wouldn't move out.

After he came to "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" in 2002, I referred his complaint to Chief Supt. Domingo Reyes, the then director of PNP Recom 4 based in Camp Vicente Lim.

But instead of being deterred by the complaint, Descalzo's harassment turned into terrorism. One morning, Malaza and his family woke up to find all their chickens beheaded. Even the chicks were not spared.

Because the situation was becoming worse, I took Malaza to Director General Leandro Mendoza, then the chief of the Philippine National Police.

Mendoza called for Descalzo. He made the police officer promise in front of me and Malaza that the harassment would stop.

The harassment continued. The stoning of Malaza's church and house became more frequent.

Malaza bought a video camera. He was able to catch Descalzo hurling stones with his slingshot at the church.

The video camera also recorded the loud music Descalzo would play during church services. The speakers would be placed on the windows of Descalzo's house just across the street from the church, blaring a popular ditty, "Spaghetti pataas at pababa." The ditty has sexual implications.

Malaza no longer came back to me or Descalzo's superiors to present the evidence. He was afraid I might get irritated with him for his constant bellyaching.

On the morning of Dec. 31, 2002, while Malaza was fixing his motorbike in his compound, two men astride a motorcycle got down and shot him. Four bullets hit him.

Malaza is lucky because he survived. He's recuperating in a Manila hospital.

Has the discipline at the Philippine National Police gone down to such a low depth that subordinates no longer respect the orders of their superior officers? I brought Malaza's complaint before Gen. Domingo Reyes and no less than the then PNP chief, Director General Leandro Mendoza.

But Descalzo ignored the complaint and went on harassing the poor and helpless minister of God.

If the PNP continues to ignore Malaza's complaint, he might go to the New People's Army (NPA) which might give him instant, albeit extreme justice.

The PNP is forcing an oppressed man against the wall.

New school building to rise in Taguig City

DEUTSCHE Bank, as part of a broader regional philanthropic initiative called the Deutsche Bank Asia Foundation, today announced it had financed the construction of a two-classroom building in Taguig, and had handed over the premises to the local government, the Department of Education, and the parent-teacher-community association of Silangan Elementary School 1.

The Taguig classroom project was identified by Deutsche Bank in partnership with the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP). The construction of the building was based on specifications recommended by the Department of Education and was erected in anticipation of more enrollees in the coming years.

Before this project, the Silangan Elementary School 1, a school for elementary grade children in Taguig, held classes in a single 3-story building that had only nine classrooms. The additional classrooms are expected to benefit 1,541 grade school students from nearby Maharlika Village.

Enrico Cruz, Deutsche Bank Chief Country Officer for the Philippines, said the building provides more children with the opportunity to access education and vocational training. He added that Deutsche Bank's staff had also made personal donations to further support initiatives for the children at Silangan Elementary School 1.

The community program is a vital part of Deutsche Bank's overall commitment to the Philippines.

"Our aim is to make an impact on the lives of children by providing them the opportunity to realize their challenges and dreams of building a better future for themselves through education," added Cruz.

According to Eden Garde, PBSP director for operations, it is their goal to provide not only education but an integrated service to their beneficiaries.

Taguig Mayor Freddie Tiñga said the construction of the new building is most welcome, as the community would have a place where Christian and Muslim children can study together.

The Deutsche Bank Asia Foundation was established in 2003 and is committed to invest at least Euro 5 million over five years in community programs of 12 Asian countries where the Bank conducts business.

Rape-slay of Cavite student solved with child's testimony

By Leila B. Salaverria

COLLEGE student Brenda Decena never made it home on Dec. 16 last year after she went to a classmate's house to borrow a book for an exam. The 21-year-old was found raped, stabbed and burned in a Cavite lot five days later.

But with the help of a 5-year-old boy, five of the men who allegedly raped and killed Decena, a second year Industrial Technology student at the Cavite State University, were arrested by the National Bureau of Investigation and the police.

One of the suspects was Decena's suitor Renato Papasin, whom investigators said was also the brother of Decena's classmate from whom she borrowed a book.

Papasin along with suspects Edwin Areja, Warren Jornadal, Romeo Yanoyan and Avelino Levardo were presented to media yesterday.

Levardo is reportedly set to turn state witness and has confessed all that he knew about Decena's killing. He said he felt guilty over what they had done.

A sixth suspect, Levardo's brother Andy, remains at large.

Investigation revealed that Decena went to a classmate's house on Camias Street in Barangay Bangkal, Cavite, on the evening of Dec. 16 to borrow a book. That was the last time she was seen alive.

Levardo told investigators they decided to rape Decena when they saw her at her classmate's house. At the time, they were drinking in a nearby hut.

They allegedly accosted the woman as she was walking home along Camias Street.

Yanoyan allegedly hit Decena on the head with a two-inch by two-inch piece of wood.

Unconscious, Decena was then dragged to a grassy lot near the road, where the suspects took turns raping her.

Levardo said that when Decena moved and made a noise while she was being raped, Papasin stabbed her on the left side of the body.

Later, Jornadal allegedly sliced her inner thighs to make sure she was dead.

They later brought Decena's body to a grassy area and poured gasoline on it and set it on fire.

Authorities traced the suspects when a 5-year-old boy revealed that he heard screams near their house and went out to check. He took a peek and saw several men, one of whom was stabbing the victim.

Real, Quezon. Dingalan, Aurora. Tamil Nadu. Phuket. Bentota. Amparai. Banda Aceh.

UNICEF / 2004 / Liwanag

NATURE makes no distinctions. NEITHER should we.

In the past few months, Nature has taken its toll, here in our country, and on our neighbors. Just weeks after typhoons caused flashfloods and landslides that devastated provinces here in the Philippines, coastal communities in South Asia suffered the shock of rampaging tsunamis. In all these disasters, children are the ones who suffer the most. Aside from lack of food and safe water, many children bear the trauma of losing loved ones and homes. Schooling has been interrupted. Their lives have ground to a halt. And after having survived what may have been the most harrowing moments of their lives, they now face a most critical challenge: moving on.

Time is of the essence. Children in the devastated areas need help, and they need it NOW.

Children need to be kept alive. This will require clean water, adequate sanitation, basic nutrition, and routine medical care. Separated children must be cared for. Children who have lost their families must be found, identified, and reunited with their extended families and communities. Affected children must be protected from exploitation. Periods of devastation when families are broken apart, incomes are lost, and dignity and hope are at a low point are periods when children are most vulnerable to abuse. Finally, children need to be brought back to school in the fastest time. A learning environment gives children a positive focus point, and allows the adults around them to rebuild with more confidence.

UNICEF is working to provide such support to children in the devastated areas. BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP. Any donation you make to the UNICEF Emergency Fund will be used to help children survivors of the tsunamis in South Asia and the typhoons in the Philippines. CALL UNICEF to donate to the UNICEF Emergency Fund for the tsunami and typhoon victims. NOW is the time when a little that you give will definitely make a BIG DIFFERENCE. Donate to the UNICEF Emergency Fund NOW.

For more information: Call UNICEF Hotline: 758-1000. Or visit the website: www.unicef.org/philippines

Send a Wave of Hope

UNICEF National Ambassador Gary Valenciano will hold "Wave of Hope", a fundraising concert for the victims of the recent calamities. Venue is at the Music Museum, January 7, 2005, Friday, at 8:00 pm. Call Genesis at (632) 721-4405 and (632) 725-1937 for details. Proceeds from the Wave of Hope Fundraising Concert shall go to the UNICEF Emergency Fund.

REPLY FORM

☑ **YES**, I want to make a difference in the life of a child in devastated provinces/countries.
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to help the victims of the recent natural disasters.

unicef

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HOTLINE: 758-1000
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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

SPORTS TV

BASKETBALL: NBA—Kings vs Pacers; 8 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports—Sacramento travels to the heartland to battle Indiana.
US NCAA-Princeton vs Duke; 8 a.m. (r-midnight); Notre Dame vs Seton Hall; 2 p.m.; ESPN—The Tigers take on the Blue Devils even the Fighting Irish face the Pirates in a Big East battle.
Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

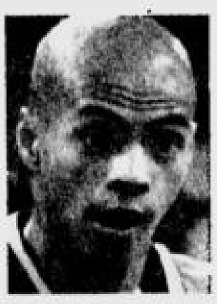
Compiled by L. Mangulat

Reyes bares possible RP players

By June Navarro

SEIGLE

RITUALO


SANTOS

CARDONA

NEWLY-INSTALLED RP coach Vincent "Chot" Reyes yesterday revealed a tentative roster of PBA players whom he feels would fit his idea of a talent-laden national team.

Aside from the first five players he named the other day, Reyes named 15 pro dribblers and four amateurs as possible members of the national training pool.

The Coca-Cola coach said Jimmy Alapag of Talk 'N Text and Alaska's Brandon Cablay would be the perfect choices to back up Ginebra's Jayjay Helterbrand at the point guard slot.

He also mentioned Kenneth Duremdes of Sta. Lucia Realty, Red Bull's Junthy Valenzuela and Lordy Tugade as reliable alternates to Willie Miller of Talk 'N Text and Shell's Tony de la Cruz.

Sta. Lucia's Dennis Espino, Mark Telan and Yancy de Ocampo of Talk 'N Text, Shell's Billy Mamaril and Alaska's Sonny Thoss can relieve San Miguel's Nic Belasco and Barangay Ginebra's Eric Menk in the middle.

"We will need enforcers like Junthy (Valenzuela) and (Lordy) Tugade while Espino and Duremdes could provide stability to the team," said Reyes, who secured the coaching portfolio over Joel Banal (Talk 'N Text), Tim Cone (Alaska) and Yeng Guiao (Red Bull).

Reyes said De Ocampo, who could probably be the tallest player in the team at 6-foot-9, should pour out his heart in training to make the roster.

Reyes is sold on Renren Ritualo of FedEx and mentioned Danny Seigle as a big plus.

"Who would not want a 100-percent healthy Danny Seigle?" said Reyes.

Seigle was sidelined for most of the 2003 and 2004 PBA seasons after hurting his right ankle during the RP team's tune-up game against Qatar for the 2002 Busan Asian Games.

Red Bull's Enrico Villanueva, Ali Peek of Alaska, Mark Pingris of FedEx and Coca-Cola's Raffy Reavis were also mentioned, leaving only the Purefoods TJ Hotdogs without a representative.

On the amateur ranks, Reyes didn't think twice of blurting out LA Tenorio (Ateneo), La Salle's Mac Cardona, Arwind Santos (FEU) and Welcoat's Anthony Washington as his top prospects.

"The players should be totally committed and are literally willing to die for each other," said Reyes.

But before Reyes fills up the training pool composed of 18 PBA players and six amateurs, the former Ateneo Blue Eagle would first form the coaching staff.

Aboy Castro of Coca-Cola and Barangay Ginebra's Binky Favis will most likely fill two of the four assistant coaches in the RP coaching staff.

Reyes said the coaching staff of the national team would be named at the end of the month while the players he included in his wish list would be invited and interviewed.

Reyes will also travel back to Argentina to learn more on how the defending world basketball champions train and is planning to ask former Chicago Bulls and LA Lakers coach Phil Jackson and deputy Tex Winters to come over.

Arigo powers Coca-Cola

IT SEEMS John Arigo is dead serious on making the national team.

Arigo made an impression by tying his career-high 35 points and steering Coca-Cola to a 104-97 win over FedEx last night in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup at the PhilSports Arena.

As national coach Chot Reyes sat warmly on the Tigers' bench, Arigo put on his audition, scoring 12 points in the fourth, including 10 inside the final two minutes as the Tigers cut loose from a tight contest.

The sweet-shooting Arigo openly declared his intention to play for the national team a day after Reyes was appointed head coach of the men's RP squad.

Reyes began relegating his coaching chores to Coca-Cola assistant coaches Melchor "Biboy" Ravanes and Nash Racela.

"His (Reyes) shoes are too big to fill," said Ravanes. "I can never do what he has done but I'll try my best for the team."

By finishing the ranking phase of the elimination round with an 8-10 record, the Tigers grabbed the seventh seed into the wild-card phase, and forged a best-of-three playoff against Purefoods, which dropped to the No. 6 slot after Alaska's 105-95 win over Sta. Lucia in the second game.

The loss was the Express' 12th in 18 games, putting them at ninth. The Realtors took No. 8 while Alaska will battle San Miguel for the No. 4 slot. The No. 3 and 4 teams have a twice-to-beat edge in the playoffs.

Reyes allowed his deputies to freely call the shots for the Tigers and when Ravanes asked for help late in the game, he gave none.

June Navarro

The scores:

First game.

COCA-COLA 104—Arigo 35, Peek 19, Reavis 11, Lao 8, Avenido 6, Abarrientos 6, Antonio 5, Wainwright 4, Juinio 4, Morano 4, Chia 2.

FEDEX 97—Ritualo 25, Arboleda 13, De Ocampo 12, Codiñera 10, Se 9, Pingris 8, Billones 6, Ferriols 5, Sison 4, Gonzales 2, Yap 2, Ejercito 1.

Quarters: 33-20, 48-41, 72-72, 104-97.

Second game:

ALASKA 105—Cablay 22, Allado 20, Cariaso 19, Thoss 15, Hugnatan 9, Cortez 8, Hawkins 4, Tajada 4, Duat 4, Johnson 0, Padilla 0.

STA. LUCIA 95—Duremdes 29, Espino 22, Omolon 13, Adriano 10, Fernandez 10, Aquino 9, Francisco 2, Gumatay 0, Cuan 0, Santos 0, Locsin 0, Gonzales 0.

Quarters: 23-10, 47-33, 77-58, 105-95.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Montaña to push harder vs ICTSI /A20

Tsunami aid: Schumacher pledges $10M /A22

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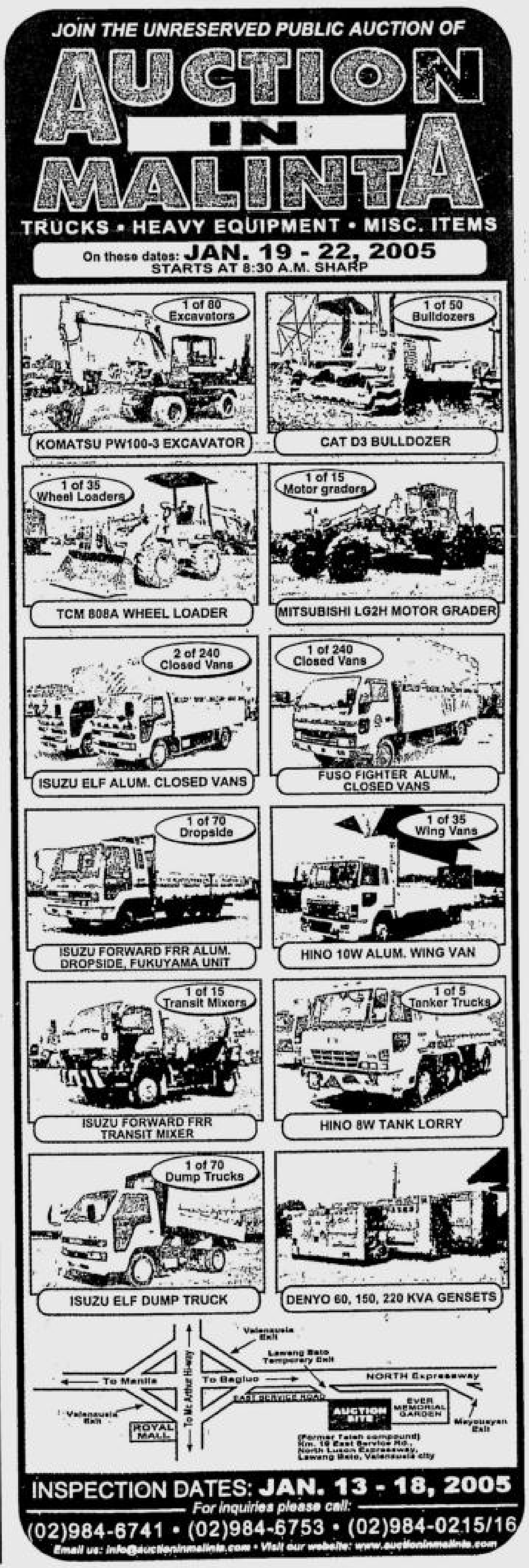
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1 of 240 Closed Vans
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1 of 70 Dropside
ISUZU FORWARD FRR ALUM. DROPSIDE, FUKUYAMA UNIT
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DOJ secretary partial vs Lim, says counsel

By Roy Luarca

LAWYER Bonifacio Alentajan yesterday said Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez has demonstrated his "manifest partiality" when he made public pronouncement about the deportation of his client, Basketball Association of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim.

Alentajan was reacting to Gonzalez's order for the Bureau of Immigration to deport Lim even before he could present Lim's case before the DOJ and the Bureau of Immigration.

"He (Gonzalez) condemns a person even before an investigation is made," said Alentajan. "Is that the way he administers justice?

"In a civilized society, every person is given due process," said Alentajan. "Even supposed aliens are given the chance to air their side regardless of their citizenship. Now it seems he (Gonzalez) already has a conclusion even before an investigation is conducted."

Alentajan said he feels sorry for Lim as he may have been a victim of personal differences between him and Gonzalez, baring that he was one of the lawyers of groups that opposed Gonzalez's confirmation as Justice Secretary before the Commission on Appointment.

Alentajan insisted there's no basis for Lim's deportation as his ancestors have been in the country since 1875 and were therefore Filipino citizens by virtue of the 1902 Philippine bill and the 1916 Jones Law.

JON-DAN Salvador (5) of Montaña drives off Paolo Hubalde of Air Philippines. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Montaña to push harder vs ICTSI

THE PRESSURE isn't any less for the Montaña Jewels.

Despite securing one of the two outright semifinal slots, Jewels coach Robert Sison aims to push his team harder.

"There will be no relaxation for the guys," said Sison as the Jewels gun for their fifth straight win against unpredictable ICTSI-La Salle in the PBL Open Championship today at the Blue Eagle Gym, Ateneo.

"We'll continue playing with the same intensity," added Sison.

The Archers, though, will try to pull an upset in the 2 p.m. match to remain in contention for one of two twice-to-beat advantages in the quarterfinals.

Welcoat Paints will also try to move closer in nailing this quarterfinal bonus when it battles the skidding AMP-Ateneo at 4 p.m.

STANDINGS	W	L
Montaña	9	2
Magnolia-FEU	9	3
Granny Goose	7	5
Welcoat	6	5
ICTSI-La Salle	5	6
Toyota Otis-Letran	5	7
AMP-Ateneo	3	8
Air Philippines	2	10

GAMES TODAY (*Blue Eagle Gym, Ateneo*)
2 p.m.—Montaña vs ICTSI-La Salle
4 p.m.—Welcoat vs AMP-Ateneo

Playmaker Al Vergara stepped up to lead the Jewels to their first semifinals appearance in four conferences. With star Alex Compton sidelined with an injury, Vergara shot a team-high 17 points in their 87-73 win over Air Philippines last Tuesday.

Montaña is favored to repeat its first-round rout of ICTSI-La Salle, 91-77. But the Archers have shown better teamwork in their last two victories as Mac Cardona found support from Ryan Araña and TY Tang.

Welcoat nipped AMP-Ateneo, 56-55, in their first-round encounter. But the Eagles need to avoid another loss today.

AMP-Ateneo is in danger of becoming the second team eliminated in the quarterfinals after dropping its third straight game against Granny Goose, 82-78, in double overtime.

Jasmine W. Payo

MANILA SEA GAMES

RP may have already lost 99 golds–Go

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE COUNTRY may have already lost 99 gold medals even before the 2005 Southeast Asian Games starts in November.

That is based on the study made by the review committee, created by Philippine Olympic Committee and Philsoc vice chair Peping Cojuangco, which will ask 18 NSAs today to justify their inclusion in the Games despite poor performances in the past.

These 18 sports account for 99 gold medals in the current SEAG calendar, approved and finalized last October by the SEAG Federation.

However, based on their 2003 Vietnam SEAG performance, they could only show five gold medals, according to the committee.

Committee head Go Teng Kok of athletics and chess said they are looking for possibilities where the country can save money and at the same time boost its chances for the overall championship.

"Imagine the total of gold medals we are likely to give away to our opponents," said Go. "It would be a double-edged process because we can slash a big chunk of the SEAG budget while we strengthen our chances for the overall championships."

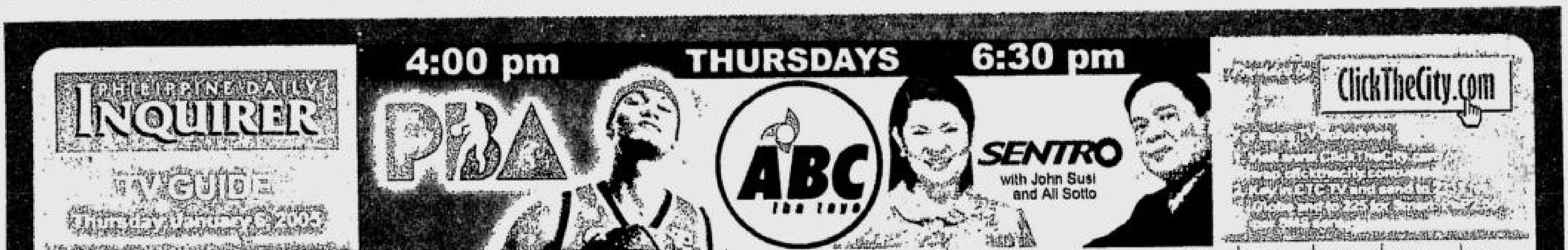
"We understand the rules that the list of events must be finalized one year before the Games, but this is a different situation altogether because the host country is in dire need of funds," said Go of the new SEAG ruling on the composition of events.

Just the same, his members, former Philippine Sports Commissioner Richie Garcia and Red Dumuk, noted that at least three member-countries have made appeals for revisions, particularly Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia well after the deadline expired.

These countries wanted to increase the number of wushu events from 18 to 24 as well as increase those of muay thai from four to six.

The committee will discuss with the NSAs their chances of winning gold medals in the SEAG. The 18 sports under question in the hearing which starts at 9 a.m. are baseball, muay thai, triathlon, rowing, sepak takraw, pencak silat, traditional boat race, volleyball, weightlifting, body building, table tennis, squash, badminton, lawn tennis, sailing, canoe-kayak, petanque and lawn bowls.

KART FORCE: Bosch Intelco's JP Carino bagged third place in the Rotax Max Senior division of the Asian Karting Open Championship Series recently in Sentul, Indonesia.



Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandara's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	Krystala	Lovers In Paris	Hiram	Star Circle Nat'l Teen Quest	Maalaala Mo Kaya			Insider	Dong Puno
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ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA					Sentro	PBA					Big News	Inq TV		Fearless Fighting	Billboard On-Air
GMA 7	Leya (2:45 PM)	Joyride (3:15 PM)	Snow Angel (3:45 PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8:45 PM)	Forever In My Heart (9:15 PM)		Magpakailanman			Saksi
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Wrestling		NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Video Hit Parade	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
IBC 13		Japan Video Topic		EZ Shop		IBC Express Balita		Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Retro TV		Travel	Japan Video Topic		Entrepinoy	Good Take	IBC News Tonite		
Solar		WWE Smackdown				Mutant League	Heavy Gear	Maxsteel	Dungeons And Dragons	Babylon V		Thunder Box		JAG					
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Presents		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Good Morning Miami	What I Like About You	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News	Entertainment Tonight	Will & Grace	JKX	Ed		Girls Behaving Badly	Simple Life 2	Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Blind Date	Fifth Wheel
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	X-Men Evolution	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup		Barkada Nights				News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		Spin City
AXN								Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	7 Days		30 Seconds To Fame							
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Smallville		The Simple Life/ The Chronicle News From The Edge		For Love Or Money/ My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance		Friends	Smallville
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Innovation		Frontiers Of Construction		Riddles Of The Dead		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr. Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia		Nat Geographic Specials		Innovation	Frontiers Of Construction		
Solar Sports					Sounds of the Finals								NBA TV Daily						
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens Of	The Fix!	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Tyler's Ultimate	Love Chain	You're Invited	Good Finds	Clean House		Breathing Room	Genuine Article	Planet Parent	Sara's Secrets
HBO	Blankman (2:40 PM)			Damaged Care (4:10 PM)				Charlotte's Web II: Wilbur's Great Adventure			Flipper (7:25 PM)			The Matrix Reloaded				Short Circuit (11:15PM)	
Star Movies				Hope Ranch (3:50 PM)			American Born Confused Desi (ABCD)				Made Up (7:20 PM)			Road To Perdition				Killing Me Softly (10:55PM)	
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	TBA					Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show	Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Addams Family	The Funky Phantom	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Mcguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Un-talkative Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax	Tarzan The Magnificent			Cover Story			Singles (5:45 PM)				Quicksand			My Husband My Killer			Born To Ride (10:40PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	A Time To Remember				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		Strong Medicine		A Place Called Home			Sue Thomas: F.B.Eye		Mysterious Ways
Discovery Channel		Hour Asia				Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Monster Garage		Ultimate Guide		Wild Discovery		Best Of Discovery			
MTV Philippines		MTV Asia Hitlist		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits	05 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline		MTV U-Break	MTV Jams	Rouge	TRL		Globally Dismissed	Pimp My Ride	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
EWTN	A Christian Pilgrimage To Jordan	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Suffering Church	Angel Force	Children's Rosary	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of The Angels Monastery	The Spirit Of Catholic Leadership	Saints: A Closer Look	EWTN Gallery	EWTN Live With Father Mitch Pacwa		Pope John Paul's Legacy To The Family	Council Of Faith	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	Holy Spirit In The Church	The Journey Home	

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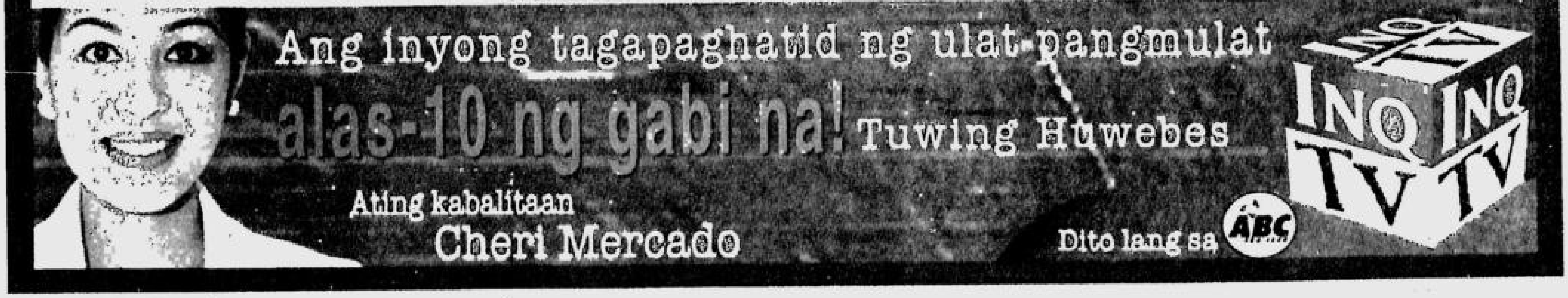
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Cheri Mercado
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INQ TV

Everything set for PSA Awards Night Jan. 13

ATHLETES, entities and patrons who did their share in making 2004 a year to remember in local sports will be honored during the PSA Awards Night on Jan. 13 at the Manila Pavilion.

"The PSA is all set to fete all those who did us proud in sports in the year just ended. We are all honored to be with our outstanding athletes, supporters and friends of sports during the rites," said Philippine Sportswriters Association president Jimmy Cantor of Malaya.

The 90-minute affair will have pro golfer Jennifer Rosales and ring idol Manny Pacquiao leading the list of awardees as Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year, respectively.

Incoming Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose 'Peping' Cojuangco will be the guest of honor and speaker in the rites sponsored by Red Bull, Supermax, Pagcor, San Miguel Beer, the Philippine Sports Commission, Accel and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, with NBN-4 as the official carrying station.

Amateur basketball star Alex Compton of Montaña Pawnshop and Lala Roque will host the affair for the second straight year.

Meantime, Cantor said awardees who will not get their invitations in advance are advised to get theirs at the reception area before the rites begin at 8 p.m.

Only 65 awardees make up the honor roll, including four great athletes of another time who will be elevated to the PSA Hall of Fame.

These are track stars Lydia de Vega and Mona Sulaiman and basketball legends Carlos Loyzaga and Lauro Mumar.

JENNIFER Rosales presents to PLDT chair Manny Pangilinan a souvenir from her breakthrough season on the LPGA Tour, where she scored a breakthrough victory in the Chick-Fil-A championship. Rosales, named by the Philippine Sportswriters Association as this year's Sportswoman of the Year, thanked MVP for the support of PLDT Global, which produced phone cards bearing J-Ro's image.

Alex, Bata, Django still among top 10

FILIPINO cue masters Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan, Efren "Bata" Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante made it to the world's top 10 again based on the December rating released by the World Pool-Billiard Association.

Pagulayan, the 26-year-old Cabana, Isabela, native, garnered 980 points in eight WPBA sanctioned events to land third.

Now based in Ontario, Canada, Pagulayan won last year's Taiwan World Pool 9-Ball championships to get his biggest paycheck of $75,000 that put him behind Reyes in the 2004 Player Money List with earnings of $118,183.00.

Reyes, top grosser with $124,150.00 in winnings, was ranked No. 5 after accumulating 920 points. Bustamante settled at No. 7 with a total of 730 points and $48,200.00 earnings.

The top 10 are No. 1 Ralf "Kaiser" Souquet of Germany, No. 2 Thorsten "The Hitman" Hohmann of Germany, No. 4 Niels Feijen of the Netherlands, No. 6 Marcus Chamat of the Netherlands, No. 8 Alex Lely of the Netherlands, No. 9 Oliver Ortmann " The Machine" of Germany and No. 10 Thomas Engert of Germany.

Other Filipino players in the 2004 rankings are No. 20 Marlon Manalo, No. 37 Santos Sambajon, No. 40 Antonio Lining, No. 41 Ramil Gallego, No. 42 Jose "Amang" Parica, No. 53 Rodolfo " Boy Samson" Luat, No. 61 Dennis Orcollo, No. 82 Antonio Gabica, No. 90 Warren Kiamco, No. 124 Leonardo "Dodong" Andam, No. 146 Gandy Valle and No. 147 Ronnie Alcano.

Trish Rañola is the lone Filipina in the WPBA womens' list at No. 83.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Thai leads foreign cast in RP Ladies Open golf

THAI Nontaya Srisawang, a well-traveled teenager loaded with impressive credentials, looms as the biggest foreign threat in next week's Philippine Ladies Open golf championship.

Tucked under the 17-year-old Srisawang's belt are the Thailand Ladies Amateur and Hong Kong Ladies Open titles not to mention jungolf achievements in Asia and the United States that should merit her a high seeding in the 54-hole tourney set Jan. 12-14 at the Manila Golf Club.

Like local ace Jayvie Agojo, who's joining Pepperdine U this fall, Srisawang is also said to be on her way to a golf scholarship in the US.

In the recent Junior World in San Diego, California, the Thai finished one rank higher than Agojo at ninth place—a feat which didn't go unnoticed by the college scouts.

Srisawang, runner-up in the Queen Sirikit last year which featured all the top players in Asia, will be forming a double-bladed Thai threat with 2-handicapper Suteera Chanachai in this exposure tourney intended to scout the opposition for the Southeast Asian Games the country is hosting this year.

Even Singapore has taken the cue and is bringing its entire national pool over to get a feel of the local conditions and take a closer look at the possible challengers.

Hong Kong will be represented by two low-handicap juniors, Jun Wi Demi Mak and Jun Ki Ginger Mak.

The entries of Malaysia are still being awaited by the organizing Women's Golf Association of the Philippines.

The 2004 RP Ladies Open has drawn the major backing of the First Gentleman Foundation, Herma Group and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office as major sponsors. Hole sponsors are Pacific Online, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), Park Lane Jewellers, PacSports, Bank of Commerce, INQUIRER Golf, Dunkin Donuts, Mega Magazine, Callaway, All Transport Network, Crucible Gallery and Key Stone Lamps.

Defending champion Frances Bondad, whose Filipino citizenship is being worked on for her to be eligible for the SEA Games squad, is now doing the rounds of local courses to prepare for her title-retention bid. Bondad's parents are Filipinos but was she was born in Los Angeles and raised in New South Wales, Australia.

Another former champion, Carmelette Villaroman, is also in the roster as well as Lora Roberto, whose last-day breakdown opened the way for Bondad to capture the title last year.

The field will be classified according to their scores after the first day with the top 30 percent making up the championship. The rest will play for the Class A and Class B titles. Interested parties may call 0917-5295324 for details or e-mail wgap71@hotmail.com.

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JAYVIE Agojo will encounter stiff challenge from Srisawang (right).

SPORTSWATCH

Gonzales posts back-to-back wins

LONE Filipino entry International Master Jayson Gonzales registered back-to-back wins at the expense of Jovi Radovanovic of Yugoslavia and Alan Smith of England in the sixth and seventh round Tuesday to boost his chances in the 80th Hastings International Chess Congress at the Horntye Park in Hastings, England. Gonzales, aiming for his second grandmaster result, climbed to 4.5 points on four wins, two losses and one draw. The 33-year-old Gonzales, a member of the Philippine Army Chess Team, will meet IM Peter Marusenko of Ukraine in the eighth round.

NM Marlon Bernardino

Emperado leads Checkmate team

SEEDED players Emmanuel Emperado and Gabriel Layugan banner the Milo Checkmate team's campaign in the World Open Chess Championships on June 28 in Philadelphia, USA. Joining them are Antoni Angelo Seloterio, Jan Nigel Galan, Kim Lo, Aldous Roy Coronel, Malcolm Kwok and the winner in the best-of-five series between Rommelle delos Santos and Julius Caesar Marquez. Seloterio dealt Raymund Astillero of Valenzuela City in 35 moves of a Ruy Lopez variation to rule the under 12 division in the final round.

NM Marlon Bernardino

San Pablo City hosts Speedfest

A DOUBLE treat awaits extreme motorsports enthusiasts this weekend when the 2005 Ultimate Red Horse Beer-Smart Buddy Speedfest Championship series takes off in San Pablo City, Laguna, on Jan. 7-9. The major presenters of the event are Red Horse Extra Strong Beer Ito ang Tama and Smart, the country's leading prepaid cellular service provider. The event will showcase the country's top motocross riders and 4 x 4 practitioners and usher in the weeklong festivities lined up by San Pablo City Mayor Vic Amante for the 2005 Coco Festival, the theme for the city's town fiesta on Jan. 15. MP Turbo is the organizer of the five-leg series.

Bill Shaw tilt tees off at Wack Wack

THE 16TH Bill Shaw Memorial Golf Tournament tees off on Jan. 28 and 29 at the fabled Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City.

More than 200 teams are scheduled to report for a shot-gun start (6 a.m. and 12 noon) every day at Wack Wack's challenging West Course and the famous East Course. Format will be aggregate in the West Course and scramble in the East Course.

Chair Ben Abalos, Wack Wack president, will drive the ceremonial ball on Jan. 26, which will be followed by cocktails for all participants and sponsors of this annual event.

The organizing committee is headed by Pablo Soon as chair, and assisted by Sonny Go as vice chair and Andy Co, Pocholo Jacinto, Ricky Laurel and Evelyn Sy as members.

Soon assures all participants of fabulous trophies and raffle prizes that will be given away during the awards dinner on Jan. 29. The entry fee is P6,000 per team.

A Toyota Camry awaits the golfer who makes a hole-in-one in the par-3 holes of Wack Wack.

The 2005 Bill Shaw is presented by Samsung Electronics Phils. with Northwest Airlines-Mla-NY-Mla Business Class ticket for two, Toyota Balintawak and Asian Therapeutics Inc.—OSIM (GNC Products) as hole-in-one sponsors.

Major sponsors are Philippine Airlines, Pacsports and the First Gentleman Foundation with Boysen and Sta. Elena Properties as premier sponsors.

Fernandina Suites, Discovery Suites, GG&A Clubshares, lawyer Gilberto Duavit, Equitable PCI Bank, Pascual Lab, Cathay Land, McDonald's Phils., Waterfront Hotel and Casino, Avesco Marketing Corp., MC Home Depot, Liwayway Marketing Corp., Kubota Agro-Industrial Machinery Phils. Inc., Godiva, Csutom Clubmaker and Prime Alcohol are the minor sponsors.

La Salle, PSC resume drive today

LA Salle and Philippine Sports Commission resume their bid in the Shakey's V-League second conference as they take on Letran and San Sebastian College, respectively, today at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

The Lady Archers are out to extend their winning run to five after an opening day loss to the defending champions UST Tigresses, unbeaten in six starts, as they collide with the Letran belles in the 5 p.m. main game.

But Letran, in fourth place with a 2-win, 3-loss card, is expected to go all out in a bid to foil the Lady Archers at the close of first round action of the tournament sponsored by Shakey's Pizza.

PSC, on the other hand, tries to bounce back from a loss to La Salle as it plays SSC at 3 p.m.

The Lady Legends, composed mostly of members of the team that gave the country its last volleyball medal in the 1993 Singapore Southeast Asian Games, are back after a long holiday break and are raring to improve their 4-2 slate. The Lady Stags are reeling from a 14-25, 18-25, 14-25 loss to the Tigresses Tuesday.

The PSC-SSC match will be telecast live on IBC-13 with the La Salle-Letran game to be aired tomorrow starting at 3 p.m.

MP Turbo moto race starts 2005

THE 2005 motocross season begins this Friday with the staging of the inaugural round of the Smart-Red Horse Speedfest-National Motocross Championships in San Pablo City .

The country's top motocross riders, led by eight-time national champion and 2004 Philippine Sportswriters Association (PSA) awardee Glen Aguilar of Caltex Revtex, are expected to see action in the event organized by the MP Turbo Sports and sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa), the country's governing body for motorcycle sports.

Aguilar is expected to be challenged anew by multititled Jovie Saulog, Bebet de la Cruz and "Rookie of the Year" awardee Kenneth San Andres.

Namssa president Ken Falco said the San Pablo leg will serve as a fitting curtain-raiser to another year-round motocross season which includes stops in Batangas, Bulacan, La Union, Tuguegarao, Baguio, Roxas, Bacolod, Cebu, Brooke's Point and Iloilo.

Highlight of the motocross season is the staging of the highly successful FIM Asian Motocross Championship in Puerto Princesa City.

The event will be held as part of Namssa's 10th year anniversary celebrations this year.

The top riders in these Namssa-sanctioned races will represent the country in select international competitions.

For inquiries, call Valdez (0917-8992363).

The Word

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

I LIKE what Fr. Jerry Orbos, SVD, wrote in "The Word" on Jan. 4: "I am sad that many parents today teach their children to be wise and not be fooled by people."

"The Word," by the way, has become my favorite book since Sol F. Juvida started giving it to me as a Christmas gift some years back. Sol J buys it at the Pink Sisters of Baguio City December each year.

Continued Fr. Jerry: "In effect, our parents are teaching their children to be selfish."

I like Fr. Jerry's stance since it is more or less similar to one of my principles all these years: "It's better that I be duped than I to dupe."

Some people tend to fool us. We see them almost every day.

A guy pretending to be crippled, begging for alms.

A "mother" cradling her "child," begging for alms.

Even kids are manipulated by a syndicate, unleashing them as beggars/urchins, complete with props like leis and, at times, tears in their eyes.

You give, and some people who see you give, will laugh at you. In their mind, they must be saying, "There goes another fool again."

It's easy to act fool. It's hardest to act wise.

But if you have something to give, why not give?

I don't know why some people make living hard. It is easiest to give; it frees you of guilt, makes you feel light as a feather.

In fact, if you have nothing to give and you still give, that is the best proof that you own a Christian heart, that you love your neighbor more than yourself.

Once, a friend gave me a glass of fresh orange juice that was prepared with zeal and perseverance; the squeezing of the orange was a real hassle in those days: No blenders yet. A boy arrived and I offered the glass of juice. He accepted it.

I got a scolding.

I took it in stride.

In basketball, you assist more than shoot is good.

In life, you give more than receive is good.

As I keep saying, sports is life and life is sports. Both espouse teamwork.

Coach Leo Austria of the amazing Shell said he knows who the fool is during a game.

"At first, I won't bench him," he said. "A fool tries to fool me by giving it his best shot in the early goings, which I really need in the overall interest of the team. It's when payback time comes that I put a stop to his fooling: I bench him before he can harm the team."

In short, you can play fool and still come out the winner. It's different when you act fool all the way by not giving.

You don't play along, assist in a way, you are an individualist.

There's no room for individualists in sports, in life. You don't co-exist, you are worst than Hitler: dictator. To be a Hitlerite, if not Imeldific, is always to be I, me, mine.

A loner, the bad kind, can personify selfishness. He keeps a world detached from reality. Isn't it said that no man is an island?

Teamwork is always the key, wherever you are, whoever you are, whenever there is breath in you. To be a fool is to co-exist with the wise.

I remember what Tito Sotto, when he was still vice mayor of Quezon City, said: "Among ten people asking for help, maybe one or two of them is trying to fool me. To make sure that I wouldn't hurt the one genuinely seeking help, I extend help to all 10 of them."

How nice.

Do we all think that way?

***

FASTBREAK. Pino "Kanor" Tengasantos, the "glass mate" of my youth who is now the tango king of Honolulu, Hawaii, planed in yesterday. He is dying to flex his dancing shoes come Jan. 29, when Mangatarem (Pangasinan) celebrates its town fiesta at the plaza auditorium. Welcome home, idol.

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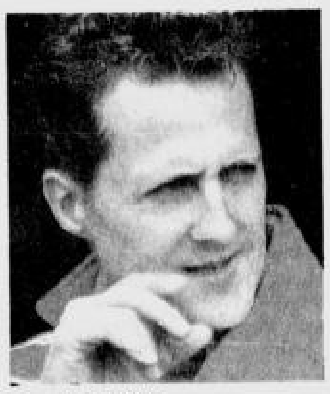
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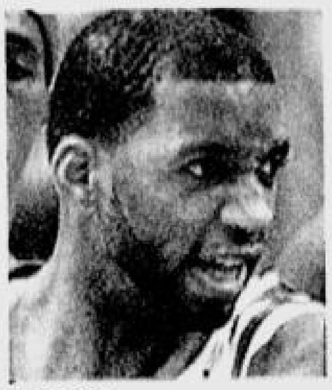
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Tsunami aid: Schumacher pledges $10M; NBA pitches in

BERLIN—Formula One champion Michael Schumacher will donate $10 million to aid efforts for tsunami victims in Asia.

Manager Willi Weber made the pledge in a telephone call on Tuesday to a televised fund-raising gala in Germany titled "We want to help—a heart for children" and organized in collaboration with the German Red Cross, the UN Children's Fund and other organizations.

A decision on how the Ferrari driver's donation will be used is to be made together with the Foreign Ministry in the next few days.

In the NBA, Tracy McGrady, Kobe Bryant, Jermaine O'Neal and four other NBA players have promised to donate $1,000 for every point they score in a game later this week to help victims of the tsunami.

Bob Sura of the Houston Rockets, Jalen Rose of the Toronto Raptors, and Pau Gasol and Mike Miller of the Memphis Grizzlies also are taking part in the $1,000-per-point donations, which will be made to UNICEF.

Agent Arn Tellem will match the highest donation made by any of the players.

On Tuesday, the Washington Wizards sold "Tsunami Relief Bands" for a minimum donation of $2, with all proceeds going to UNICEF.

Bryant, McGrady, Miller and Gasol will base the size of their donations on the number of points they score in Thursday's games, and O'Neal, Sura and Rose will donate $1,000 for each point they score on Friday.

Tellem said the program, called "Shoot-a-Thon," hopes to raise about $250,000.

"I think when more players find out about it, they'll get involved," Rose said.

"It is such a devastating scene over there, and no one ever wants to have to go through that," said O'Neal. "It really helps you realize how blessed you are."

O'Neal's contribution total Tuesday would have been rather significant as he set an NBA season high and came within two points of the team record.

Also, the Harlem Globetrotters plan to donate at least $100,000 and match funds raised by the sale of game programs during their 2005 tour to over 200 cities in the United States and Canada. The money raised will also go to UNICEF.

"As concerned global citizens and ambassadors of goodwill, the Harlem Globetrotters feel strongly about doing something to help those who are suffering, especially the youth," Globetrotters owner and chair Mannie Jackson said.

Tennis must help

In Madras, India, Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman said Tuesday he was enlisting the support of fellow touring tennis pros to help the sport be at the forefront of raising funds for the relief of tsunami victims.

"The tennis family should play a big role in tsunami victims' relief operations, and we've begun the process in Madras where several hundred people have lost their lives," Bjorkman, 32, said during the ATP's season-opening Chennai Open.

The tournament in Madras started as scheduled on the ATP calendar despite an earthquake off the coast of Indonesia and resulting tsunamis that killed nearly 8,000 in the state. The Asian tsunami's death toll is expected to exceed 150,000.

"We need to support the relief work and put a little light in the dark," said Bjorkman.

Russia's Wimbledon tennis champion Maria Sharapova had earlier given $10,000 to Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra while she was in Bangkok for an exhibition match. *AP*

Jermaine waxes hot

Drops 55 on Bucks; Bowen leaves LA bruised

INDIANAPOLIS—Jermaine O'Neal scored a career-high and NBA season-high 55 points and had 11 rebounds to carry the Indiana Pacers to a 116-99 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks on Tuesday night.

The All-Star has made an immediate impact since an arbitrator reduced his 25-game suspension for fighting with Detroit fans to 15 games, with Indiana going 4-1.

"What I'm happy about is we've won four in a row," said O'Neal, who also had 11 rebounds. "I tip my hat off to my team. They put me in position, that's what this team is all about."

O'Neal's 55 bested Allen Iverson's 54 points on Dec. 18, also against the Bucks.

He shot 18-for-28 from the field and 19-of-25 from the line, just missing George McGinnis' franchise record of 58 points, set while the Pacers were in the ABA in 1972. O'Neal's 25 freethrow attempts were also a franchise record.

"It just was one of those wonderfully enchanting nights for our team and for him," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said.

Desmond Mason scored 21 points to lead five Bucks in double figures. Michael Redd added 19 points and Mike James scored 15.

Jamaal Tinsley had 14 points, seven rebounds and five assists, and Jeff Foster added 10 points and 10 rebounds for the Pacers.

O'NEAL: Career-high REUTERS

Kings 105, Knicks 98

In New York, Maurice Evans came off the bench to score a career-high 16 points, and Sacramento defeated the Knicks for its eighth win in nine road games.

Chris Webber scored 22 points, Peja Stojakovic had 21, Mike Bibby added 19 and Brad Miller 16 for the Kings, who got only two points in 29 minutes from starting shooting guard Doug Christie.

Evans, a swingman who was used sparingly by Minnesota two years ago before playing professionally in Italy, made up for what Christie failed to provide. He shot 7-for-9 from the field to surpass his previous career high of 13 set three games earlier against Golden State.

Stephon Marbury led New York with 26 points, 25 of which came in the first three quarters. Nazr Mohammed added 22 points and Allan Houston scored a season-high 21.

Wizards 112, Nets 88

In Washington, Larry Hughes matched his season high with 33 points and the Wizards made a franchise-record 14 3-pointers in a victory over New Jersey.

Vince Carter had a season-high 31 points on 15-for-23 shooting for the Nets. Jason Kidd added 19 points, eight rebounds and seven assists for New Jersey.

Hughes had seven assists and five steals to lead the Wizards, who got 3-pointers from seven different players. Gilbert Arenas and Jarvis Hayes each made three 3s as Washington surpassed its previous record of 12, set on Nov. 5, 2003, against Dallas.

Spurs 100, Lakers 83

In San Antonio, Bruce Bowen scored a career-high 24 points, including five 3-pointers, and helped limit Kobe Bryant to 17 points in San Antonio's win.

San Antonio matched a franchise record by making 15 3-pointers. The defense-oriented Spurs held the Lakers to just 32 points in the first half.

Brent Barry made four 3-pointers and finished with 14 points for San Antonio, which led by as much as 29. Manu Ginobili had 13 and Tim Duncan scored 12 points and grabbed 15 rebounds.

Bryant scored at least 40 points in the Lakers' three previous games, but Bowen held him to 12 below his average on 5-for-16 shooting.

Suns 122, Timberwolves 115

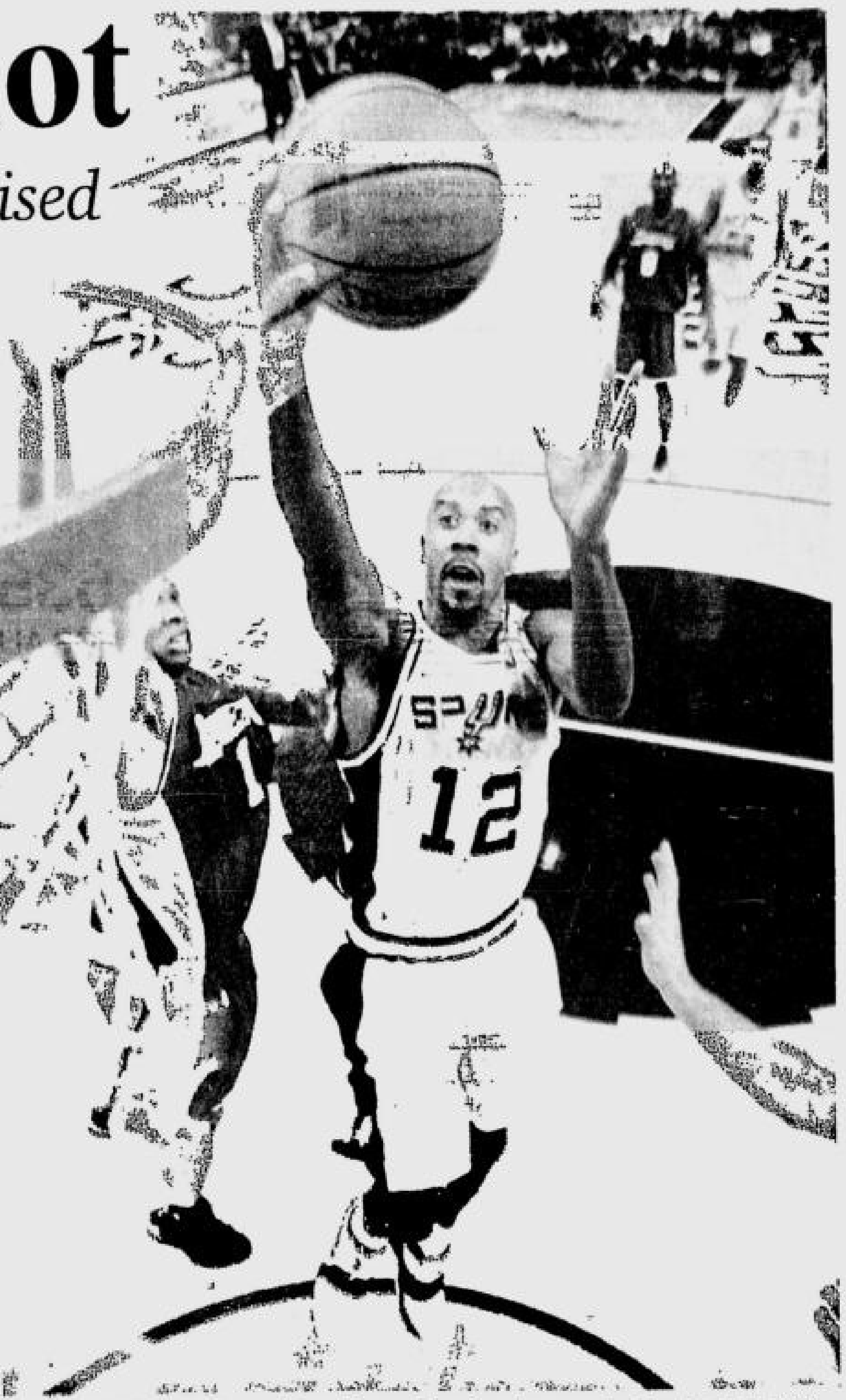
In Minneapolis, Amare Stoudemire scored 34 points before being ejected and helped Phoenix overcome Kevin Garnett's career-high 47 points and beat Minnesota.

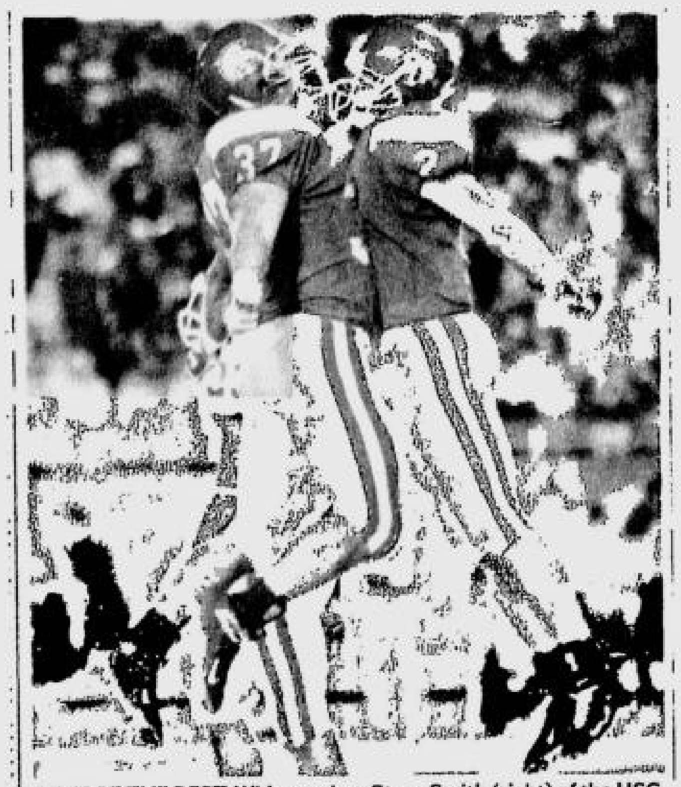
Minnesota cut a 19-point fourth-quarter deficit to five, but lost for the seventh time in 10 games.

Shawn Marion added 28 points, Steve Nash put up 20 points and 16 assists and the Suns withstood the late charge to improve to 14-1 since a 97-93 home loss to Minnesota on Dec. 4.

Stoudemire, coming off a career-high 50-point performance on Sunday against Portland, went 15-for-19 from the floor and grabbed eight rebounds.

Quentin Richardson scored 16 points, and Joe Johnson had 11 for Phoenix (27-4), which owns the league's best record and highest scoring average—more than 109 points per game. *AP*


SAN ANTONIO Spurs forward Bruce Bowen drives for a lay-up against Los Angeles Lakers guard Caron Butler. Bowen powered the Spurs on both ends of the floor. AP


BEST OF THE BEST: Wide receiver Steve Smith (right) of the USC Trojans celebrates with teammate David Kirtman after beating the Oklahoma Sooners, 55-19, in the the FedEx Orange Bowl to end the season the way they started it—No. 1. AFP

Safin fails to save Russia in Hopman Cup

PERTH, Australia—Red-hot favorites Russia bowed out of contention in the mixed teams Hopman Cup tennis tournament here Wednesday as big-hitting star Marat Safin again failed to fire in their second straight loss.

The shock 2-1 defeat of the Russians, beaten by both unseeded Germany in their opening tie and now Argentina, was an ominous sign for Safin as he prepares for the Australian Open starting in Melbourne on January 17.

The world No. 4 has lost both of his singles rubbers in the tournament and along with teammate Anastasia Myskina, the pair have never won a mixed doubles rubber at the event in five attempts.

Safin appeared sluggish as he succumbed to the lightning pace of Argentina's world No. 7 Guillermo Coria, 7-6 (7/4), 6-1, offering little more than token resistance in the second set.

He and Myskina then went down, 6-2, 6-0, in the deciding mixed doubles after Myskina had earlier put them in the box seat with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Gisela Dulko in just 56 minutes.

Coria's court speed proved the decisive factor against Safin who only arrived at the tournament from Moscow 24 hours before his first match and has looked well below his best since.

"It wasn't my day today on the serve, Gisela was returning winners on my serve so it was kind of embarrassing for me," Safin joked. "But I have to live with that, work on my serve and get ready for the Australian Open."

Safin conceded his game had simply not been good enough against an in-form opponent.

"I wasn't fast enough, I wasn't sharp enough," he explained. *AFP*

Marquez irked at Pacquiao fight purse

STILL seething at the thought of getting a smaller slice of the pie, World Boxing Association and International Boxing Federation featherweight king Juan Manuel Marquez yesterday threatened promoters of the fight, saying that the i's wont be dotted and the t's will never be crossed unless his purse demand is met.

Marquez, speaking through his manager-trainer Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain during a lull in training at the Gilberto Roman Gym in Mexico City, informed once again that until now, they have not yet signed to fight Pacquiao on February 26 and will not do so until Top Rank promoter Bob Arum and his Mexican contact Fernando Beltran give them what is due a dual champion.

"I am scheduled to face Pacquiao once again, but that fight can only happen if the purse offer is revised," said Marquez in Spanish yesterday.

Reportedly, Arum and Beltran are putting up $750,000 for Marquez, while the Filipino southpaw will be getting $900,000 in their second meeting set on February 26 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Marquez and Beristain had earlier said that they want $1.5 million, as they think that the Mexican warrior deserves better pay as he holds the two belts that will be put on the line.

Beristain had earlier informed that if a deal is not reached by mid-January, the fight will not push through. The manager had informed that Top Rank's Todd Du Boef, the stepson of Arum, and Fernando Beltran are proving to be 'difficult' on the negotiating table.

Meanwhile, American promoter Murad Muhammad took a swipe at Marquez and Beltran, telling the duo that Pacquiao is the draw and not Marquez, hence they should be grateful to what is being offered, which is still much bigger compared to the purse which Marquez received in his first fight with Pacquiao and in his last bout against Orlando Salido. *Salven Lagumbay, Contributor*

Producers: We'll keep on making . . .

From page A25

Films producer Robbie Tan.

"The problem is not really the taxes, piracy," he said. "It is partly the economy. People give low priority to watching local films. They'd rather spend money on [sending] text messages."

Monteverde blames the high cost of media advertising that creates a vacuum in the promotion of movies.

"We don't own a broadcast company to promote our movies," she said. "We rely mainly on the support of the movie press to create awareness for our movies."

The problem really lies in the system, Monteverde added.

"I don't know how to explain this," she said. "But there's something wrong with the system."

This convenient access to media for movie promotion is apparently limited to Star Cinema, which relies on ABS-CBN to saturate the market with their movie trailers, and to GMA Films, which banks on GMA 7 for the same services.

"They have something that we don't have," Ilacad said. "They have the machinery of a broadcast network. To them [media cost] is just a paper entry." Gloria maintains that promotions do not make or break a movie.

"Some people think that promotions is the secret to a successful film, but that's not accurate," Gloria said. "Our industry needs to examine itself. As a producer, I lack self-examination. It's easy enough to blame the lack of promotions, but no one really admits that maybe, the market did not find the movie beautiful. We lack post-mortem and self-examination. With a post-mortem, we would be able to correct our mistakes."

Despite a generally dismal outlook, movies will still be produced this year.

For Viva Films producer Vic del Rosario, these would be small, concept-driven films that would explore the human condition without torturing clichés.

"This is where good narrative begins and templates end," he said. "We have to raise the bar of good entertainment, produce quality entertainment even with a small budget. That's the true test of creativity. Hunger inspires creativity, and new ways in being creative would always be invented."

Spend wisely

"You can't just scrimp all the time," said Monteverde. "I understand the demands of directors when they ask for big budgets. But they should understand that they should spend wisely, although I know they're desire is only to come up with a good movie. I will make movies for as long as I can still move on."

"I hope to make five or six movies this year," said Tan. "I'm driven by my passion for films. Where would we be without movies?"

"I have plans to do maybe one or two movies for the third quarter and another before Christmas," said Ilacad. "Of course, we always plan for the festival but it's a screening process and we don't know for sure if our movie would be chosen."

"I'm going to do more feature films this year," said Gloria. "In fact, I already finished two for release—Peque Gallaga's 'Pinoy Blonde,' a quirky comedy, and 'Pasyon USA,' with Robin Padilla, which is mainstream comedy."

See you at the movies.

LILY Monteverde

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2 BLADE: TRINITY	2 OCEAN'S 12	2 OCEAN'S 12	6 BLADE: TRINITY	GUARANTEED SEATS 2 OCEAN'S 12	2 BLADE: TRINITY
3 KUNG FU HUSTLE	3 BLADE: TRINITY	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 OCEAN'S 12	7 HAPPY TOGETHER	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 HAPPY TOGETHER	3 ONE MISSED CALL
4 ENTENG KABISOTE	4 ENTENG KABISOTE	4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 MANO PO 3	4 HAPPY TOGETHER
5 HAPPY TOGETHER				GUARANTEED SEATS 5 KUNG FU HUSTLE	5

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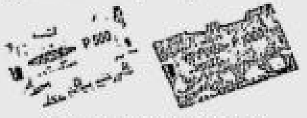

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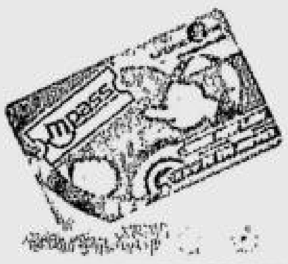

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Win some, lose some

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

DAYS before the 2004 Metro Manila Film Festival opened, we'd already viewed the festival's eight official entries, so we came out in this space with a "fearful" forecast of who the major winners would be (in our personal estimation, of course).

We termed our forecast "fearful" not because we doubted our choices, but because we weren't sure if they would in fact turn out to be the official winners, filmfest judging here being what it is.

But, we came up with our list just the same, to honor the best achievements in the festival, regardless of the official verdicts.

So, how did we fare? We did particularly well in the acting categories, with **Vilma Santos** (Best Actress), **Dennis Trillo** (Best Supporting Actor) and **Rebecca Lusterio** (Best Supporting Actress) emerging victors as we had anticipated.

But we stumbled in the Best Actor category which we thought would go either to **Cesar Montano** or **Eric Quizon**, but in fact went to **Christopher de Leon**. Christopher's performance in "Mano Po 3" was only third best in our list, but that's neither here nor there, because he got the official nod—and the trophy that went with it.

We also scored in the Best Director category. We predicted it would go to **Cesar Montano** for his sensitive handling of "Panaghoy sa Suba," and Cesar did win the award.

This was a major coup because Cesar won over **Joel Lamangan**, despite the fact that the latter directed *three* of the festival entries. Apparently, when it comes to film fests, there's no safety in numbers. Perhaps Lamangan had spread himself out too thin? Less is indeed more.

So far, so fair. But we flubbed the Best Picture award: We forecast that "Panaghoy" would win the plum prize, but it instead went to "Mano Po 3." As for "Panaghoy," it ended up taking second best picture honors, and the Gatpuno Antonio Villegas Cultural Award.

Thus, our fears regarding our forecast turned out to be pretty prophetic, as well. Which should teach us that, in the future, we should keep our predictions to ourselves!

After all, how can you factor other people's subjective takes into the prediction equation? You'd have to be a quadridextrous, polymorphous, acrobatic and super-psychic prestidigitator to swing *that*, and frankly, we have more productive and less irritating things to do.

On *second* thought, right after our film fest forecast came out, people got in touch with us and said they were using it as a guide for what movies to see in the festival, and *that* made it all worthwhile.

It's psychically satisfying to know that there are people out there who believe in our judgment, and trust us to point them toward the movies really worth watching.

To summarize, do watch "Panaghoy sa Suba," and "Mano Po 3" for the performance of Vilma Santos, and "Aishite Imasu" for Dennis Trillo's portrayal. Who knows, you could end up agreeing with us!

Movies on TV

ON CINEMAX, Jan. 6 at 6 a.m., "Around the World in 80 Days." 8:45 a.m., "Internal Affairs." Jan. 7 at 12 noon, "Tobruk."

On HBO, Jan. 6 at 8 a.m., "Life as a House." 6 p.m, "Charlotte's Web, 2: Wilbur's Great Adventure." 9 p.m., "The Matrix Reloaded." Jan. 7 at 7:30 a.m., "School Ties." 9 p.m., "Raiders of the Lost Ark." 12:45 a.m., "Stealing Harvard."

Feedback

FROM BEBENG **Sevilla Soriano**: "A wunderbar column on acting, Sir! All those acting workshops that nurture sympathy, only lending themselves to mere copying! God! 'Tis empathy that is the artistry of talent. Thank you so! A joyful New Year!"

'The 4400' finale

THE FINAL episode of "The 4400" will be shown on AXN today, Jan. 6, at 9 p.m., with repeat telecasts on Friday at 1 a.m. and 12 noon.

It's a day of revelation for agents Tom Baldwin and Diana Skouris, as conspiracies unravel and the truth behind the 4400 emerges.

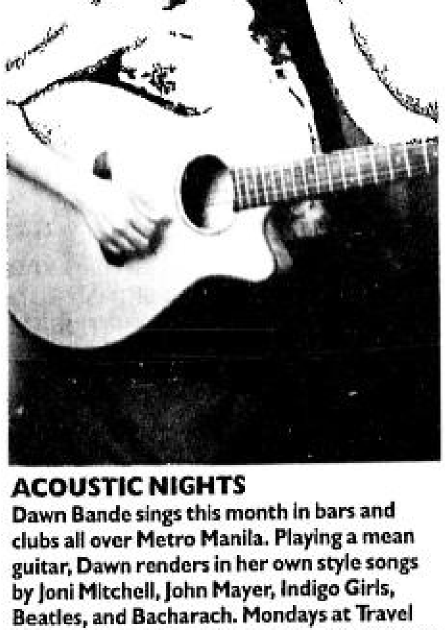
In the stunning finale that sees Tom's son being taken into custody and Tom's nephew, Danny, coming close to death, the abductors of the 4400 identify themselves, and the key to unlocking the secret to their powers is revealed.

'Batman Begins'

THE TRAILER of "Batman Begins" premieres in Philippine theaters starting Jan. 6, as an added attraction to the comedy caper, "Ocean's Twelve." Directed by **Christopher Nolan**, "Batman Begins" charts the origins of the Batman legend, and the Dark Knight's emergence as a force for good. **Christian Bale** stars as Bruce Wayne/Batman.

'CSI: Miami'

AT 12 noon today, Jan. 6 and at 12 noon and 9 p.m. on Sunday, "CSI: Miami's" second season goes to New York City, and gives viewers a sneak peek at the latest addition to the wildly successful "CSI" franchise—"CSI: NY"! Stars include **Gary Sinise** and **Melina Kanakaredes**.



ACOUSTIC NIGHTS
Dawn Bande sings this month in bars and clubs all over Metro Manila. Playing a mean guitar, Dawn renders in her own style songs by Joni Mitchell, John Mayer, Indigo Girls, Beatles, and Bacharach. Mondays at Travel Lounge, Tramo Road, Pasay; Tuesdays at Easy Street, Commonwealth Avenue; Thursdays at Whistle Stop, Edsa Shangri-La Mall; Fridays at Merk's Bar Bistro in Greenbelt Makati; and Inihaw Republic, Katipunan Road.

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2 GMA execs face libel charges

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FINALLY.

Actress Kris Aquino formally charged with libel on Tuesday two television executives for "maliciously and without justifiable motive" defaming her by circulating negative column feeds about her love affairs and her talk show.

Aquino accused GMA Corporate Communications OIC Butch Raquel and publicist Ma. Theresa Defensor of "injuring [Aquino's] good name and exposing her to public hatred."

The Makati Prosecutor's Office set bail at P10,000 each.

City Prosecutor Feliciano Aspi approved Assistant City Prosecutor's recommendation to dismiss the complaint against GMA Network President Felipe Gozon, EVP Jimmy Duavit, and VP for Entertainment Wilma Galvante "for insufficiency of evidence".

"There is here no evidence of participation, much [less] complicity, on the part of respondents Gozon, Duavit and Galvante," the resolution said. "None of the elements constitutive of libel is imputable to anyone of them."

Aquino sought P80 million in moral damages when she filed libel charges against all five last year.

Jojo Gabinete, one of the recipients of the information feed—sent via e-mail—published it in his "The Source" column in the tabloid Abante last July 9.

The column feed chastised Aquino for not acting her age and for behaving "like a blushing *kolehiyala*." It also discussed the actress' affairs with married men and her having contracted a sexually transmitted disease.

In her affidavit, Aquino said Defensor's e-mail "expressly stated that I deserve the disease ... and implied that I am ... a woman of loose morals who should not be listened to, [or serve as host] in a morning TV program."

KRIS AQUINO says her good name was "injured . . . exposing her to public hatred."

Producers: We'll keep on making movies

From page A26

He believes that creative control over a film goes beyond the aspect of production.

"You have to be creative holistically, in the financial aspect, the promo," Gloria said. "This way, you can still do a film, control a project and make money. Do not control the budget and you can lose. You have to take into consideration that the number of people who watch films has gone down. But there are still a lot of people watching films."

P50-M gross rare

Regal Entertainment producer Lily Monteverde has turned to the ancillary earnings of a movie for profit. These are from TV, cable and video rights.

"We don't make money from the gross receipts," she admitted.

The movie has to gross an average of P50 million to break even, according to OctoArts Films producer Orly Ilacad.

"But that's very rare now," he said. "Ask the theaters' association and they will tell you. They will also tell you a movie that grosses that much is also very rare."

Ilacad laments the lack of government support for the movie industry.

"The government should help the industry," he said. "Taxes should be reduced so we can help ourselves in doing what we want to do. Movies should be treated as products, as a country's commodity that can be exported.

"Look at Korean films. They are now enjoying an export market, and that's because of their stringent laws in film importation. Their government has mandated foreign film distributors to produce a local movie for every three that they export.

"The government has no money to subsidize the industry so we are not asking them for money. We just want their support. For example, in foreign festivals, the Department of Tourism can give us the booths for free. If we are able to sell one film out of ten entries, then that's already a beginning."

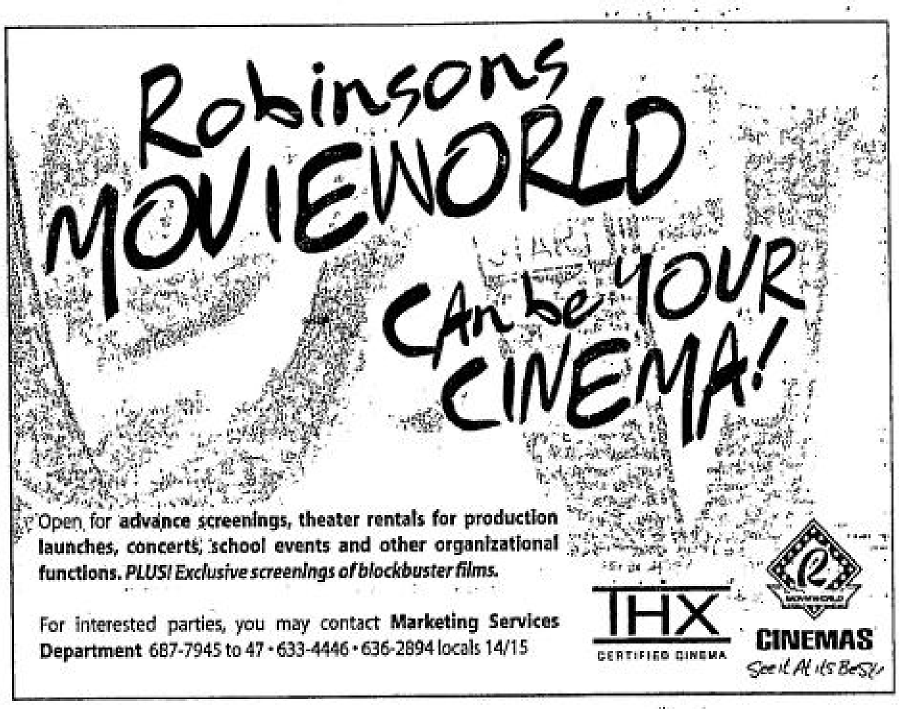
Ilacad is no longer looking at the US market for local films.

"I'd be happy just to penetrate our neighboring countries," he said.

Low priority

Local movies are also facing stiff competition from the text industry, said Seiko

PRODUCERS/ A23



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1 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 AISHITE IMASU 1941
3 SIGAW
4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
5 MANO PO 3
6 ENTENG KABISOTE

sm city marilao
1 AISHITE IMASU 1941
2 LASTIKMAN
3 MANO PO 3
4 ENTENG KABISOTE

sm city baguio
1 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 LSTIKMAN
3 AISHITE IMASU 1941
4 SIGAW

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1 AISHITE IMASU 1941
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3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
5 LASTIKMAN
6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
7 MANO PO 3
8 PANAGHOY SA SUBA

sm city batangas
1 MANO PO 3
2 LASTIKMAN
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

sm city dasmariñas
1 SIGAW
2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 MANO PO 3

sm city lucena
1 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2 LASTIKMAN
3 AISHITE IMASU 1941
4 SIGAW

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 MANO PO 3
2 SO HAPPY TOGETHER
3 LASTIKMAN
4 AISHITE IMASU 1941
5 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
6 SIGAW
7 ENTENG KABISOTE
8 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

sm city iloilo
1 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
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3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 ENTENG KABISOTE
5 LASTIKMAN
6 MANO PO 3
7 RESERVED
8 SO HAPPY TOGETHER

sm city davao
1 MANO PO 3
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 LASTIKMAN
5 AISHITE IMASU 1941
6 PANAGHOY SA SUBA

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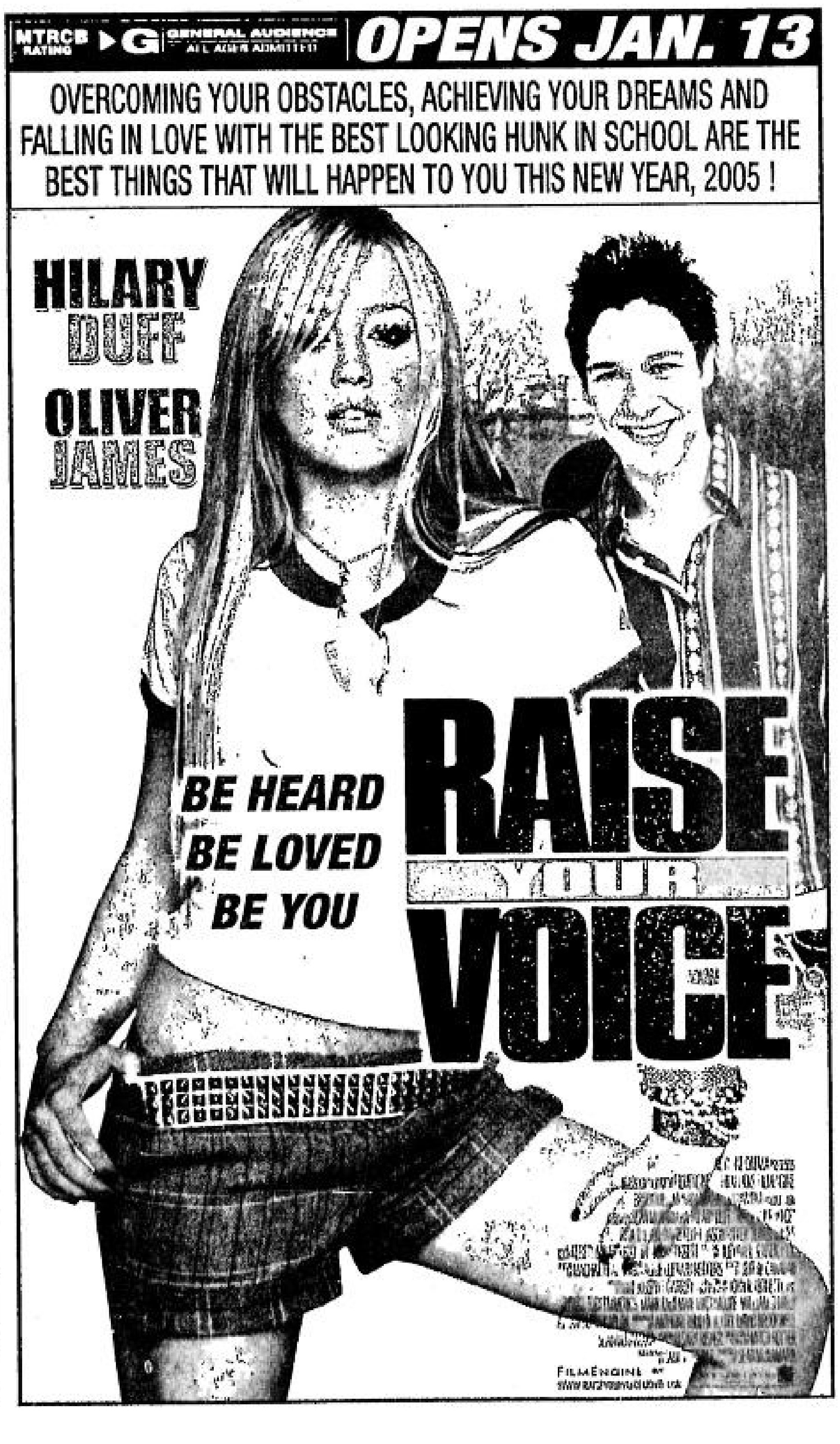

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Producers: We'll keep on making movies

By Nini Valera

(Conclusion)

"I CAN'T guess what the public wants," said Tony Gloria of Unitel, which produced last year's "Crying Ladies," directed by Mark Meily. "There is no single formula. There are so many things involved in making a good movie. There are the elements of storytelling, acting, music and everything.

"Take 'Crying Ladies.' It's the kind of film we like to do, because it's the kind of film I like to watch. There are so many predictable movies—like inane love stories; teenage movies—and they don't turn us on. They would be right if they have substance. Some could make a good TV show, but not always a movie."

TONY Gloria

Worst in RP

He said the stars are "desperate" for good movie roles.

"Some of these people have careers in television. What they need are good roles in films. If they like a project, they will be agreeable to making the movie on the basis of a new package of compensation. I think they will look at every producer and director differently, depending on the project. It's not always just a question of talent fee. They can also take risks for movies that they want to participate in. The situation is bad everywhere, but it's worse in the Philippines."

This participation in the risk, Gloria clarified, would be limited to the major stars, the director and the producer. "You don't touch the fees of the crew or the other talents," he stressed. "There's not much there you can do in terms of trimming the budget."

PRODUCERS/ A25

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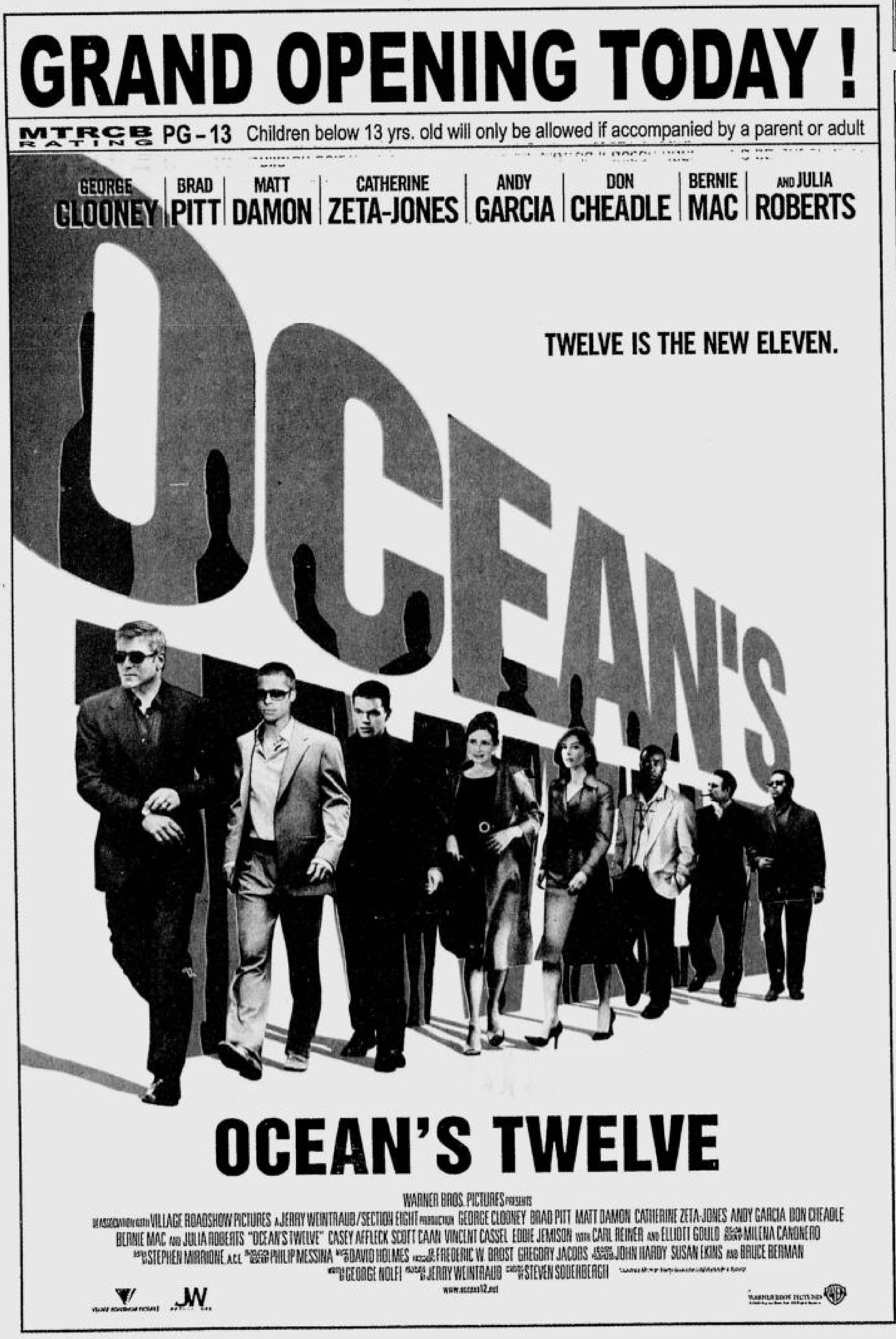

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December inflation hits 5-year high

By Michelle V. Remo

INFLATION, or the rate of increase in consumer prices, accelerated to a five-year high of 7.9 percent in December 2004 due to the combined effects of the seasonal Christmas spending and the impact on agricultural production of the typhoons that hit the country in the latter part of the year.

The National Statistics Office (NSO) said the 7.9-percent figure was the highest since April 1999, when inflation reached 8 percent. The inflation rate last month, which used 1994 as the base year, was much higher than the 3.1 percent recorded in December 2003. (Inflation for December 2004 was at 8.6 percent using 2000 as the base year).

The December figure brought the inflation rate for the entire 2004 to 5.5 percent, thus breaching the government's full-year target of 4 to 5 percent. The 5.5-percent full-year inflation figure was also higher than the 3 percent recorded in 2003.

"The typhoons that hit the country in end-November and early December affected the production of some agricultural products from Northern and Central Luzon, and parts of Visayas. For some items, such as fruits, prices are also seasonally higher in December especially around Christmas and the New Year," explained Romulo Neri, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

The NSO reported that prices of most commodities accelerated at a faster rate in December. Only the housing and repair commodity group posted a slower inflation rate, which remained at its November level of 3.7 percent.

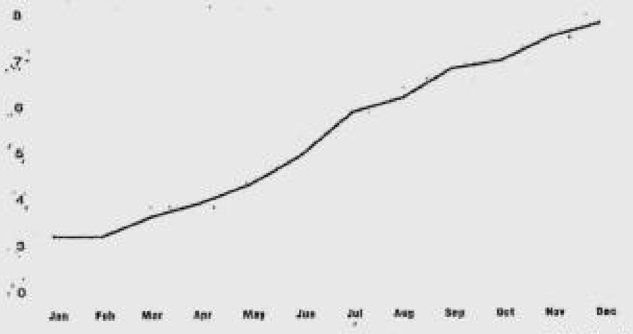
Inflation for food, beverage and tobacco was at 7.7 percent in December from only 7.1 percent in November; fuel, light and water, 18 percent from 17.3 percent; clothing, 2.7 percent from 2.6 percent; services, 12.7 percent from 12.5 percent; and miscellaneous items, 2.9 percent from 2.7 percent. For food items alone, inflation reached 8 percent in December, accelerating from 7.2 percent the previous month.

Neri, who is also economic planning secretary, said inflation would begin tapering off in early 2005 after hitting a five-year high last month, assuming that oil prices would stabilize at $33 a barrel. The Neda noted that prices of fuel and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) declined by an average of 30 centavos a liter in the last week of December.

Bernardo Villagas, economist from the University of Asia and

DECEMBER/ B2

INFLATION RATES
January to December 2004, base year = 1994



Rollback in local oil prices seen this month

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER experiencing a spate of fuel price increases in 2004, motorists can expect price reductions in the coming days.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez hinted that local oil firms had some leeway to bring down their prices this month as world market prices dropped considerably in December from their levels in November.

Documents from the Department of Energy showed that the benchmark Dubai crude fell to a December average of $34.20 a barrel from the November average of $34.87.

The price of unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products also declined to $44.81 a barrel last month from $52.45 in November.

MOPS-based diesel likewise dropped to $51.33 a barrel in December from a high $56.82 registered the month before.

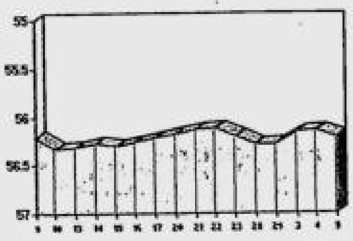
Perez said that the easing of world oil prices could likely translate to lower local pump prices even with the implementation of a higher import tariff on crude

ROLLBACK/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



₱ 56.215 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 5, 2005

¥ 104.74 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 5, 2004

GOLD: $ 428.00-428.50

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 4, 2005

January 4, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.753069	1.000000	56.1400
Japan	Yen	0.007199	0.009560	0.5367
United Kingdom	Pound	1.418028	1.883000	105.7116
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096729	0.128446	7.2110
Switzerland	Franc	0.645137	0.856678	48.0939
Canada	Dollar	0.616058	0.818063	45.9261
Singapore	Dollar	0.456543	0.606244	34.0345
Australia	Dollar	0.577374	0.766695	43.0423
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.997583	2.652590	148.9164
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200819	0.266667	14.9707
Brunei	Dollar	0.455164	0.604412	33.9317
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000108	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.019233	0.025540	1.4338
UAE	Dirham	0.205067	0.272309	15.2874
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.327900	74.5483
Argentina	Peso	0.253558	0.336700	18.9023
Brazil	Real	0.278760	0.370165	20.7811
Denmark	Kroner	0.134524	0.178635	10.0286
India	Rupee	0.017324	0.023004	1.2914
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.198202	0.263193	14.7757
Mexico	New Peso	0.066152	0.087843	4.9315
New Zealand	Dollar	0.532129	0.706614	39.6693
Norway	Kroner	0.120878	0.160514	9.0113
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012667	0.016821	0.9443
South Africa	Rand	0.128981	0.171274	9.6153
Korea	Won	0.000725	0.000963	0.0541
Sweden	Kroner	0.110480	0.146707	8.2361
Syria	Pound	0.014507	0.019264	1.0815
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023689	0.031456	1.7659
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000393	0.000522	0.0293

STOCK MARKET

Stocks hit 5-year high

SHARES closed higher yesterday, rising for a third consecutive day on the back of late purchases of second-line stocks.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed up 2.30 points, or 0.1 percent, at 1,875.37—a new five-year high. The main index rose 26.17 points Tuesday to 1,873.07.

The broader All Shares Index declined 12.56 points to 1,173.67, after rising 4.40 points to 1,186.23 on Tuesday.

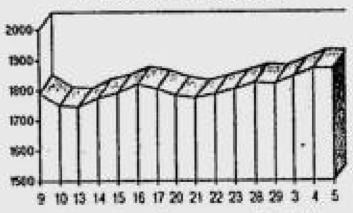
Turnover reached 1.15 billion shares valued at P1.4 billion compared to 1.89 billion shares worth P1.04 billion on Tuesday.

Losers led gainers 27 to 25, while 50 stocks were unchanged.

Traders said investors focused on second-tier stocks after pushing up blue chips early this week.

AP, AFP

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B3)

IMF experts push late bailout of ailing banks

IT IS better for banking regulators to bail out a problem bank after shutting it down rather than intervening at the early stages of distress, according to International Monetary Fund banking experts.

In a working paper titled "Managing Confidence in Emerging Market Bank Runs" dated December 2004, banking experts Se-Jik Kim and Ashoka Mody said "allowing early bank failures and using available liquidity for credible commitments to later bailouts can better boost confidence than early bailouts."

"This conclusion arises because with a high chance of liquidity shortage in the future, depositors may lose confidence and hence withdraw deposits even from potentially sound banks," the paper said.

Such a policy of late bailouts, the paper said, would be likely to receive political support when a full bailout needed to be financed by taxation.

"The logic of late bailout remains valid even when banks may hide their distress or when closures of early distressed banks create contagion," the paper explained.

In emerging markets, where government credibility is always fragile, the paper noted that institutional arrangements would usually limit the central bank's ability to act as a lender of last resort and the possibility of large fiscal deficits could generate speculative attacks. In such situation, the paper studied whether banks with early signs of distress should be bailed out or allowed to close down.

"We conclude that under sequentially revealed liquidity shortages, confidence will be boosted more and the incidence of bank runs, more limited when the bailout is reserved for banks revealed to be vulnerable at a later stage rather than banks facing early liquidity shortages," the paper said.

"Bailout of illiquid banks today risks raising the probability of a shortage of liquidity with which to bail out illiquid banks in the future. Viewing such early bailouts, depositors of all the banks whose liquidity condition will be revealed only in the future (including the otherwise sound banks) may lose confidence (i.e., expectation that their deposits will be fully protected) and run to withdraw their deposits," it explained.

IMF/ B3

INTEREST RATES

January 5, 2005-MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART 1 5-Jan-05	MART 1 4-Jan-05
1 Month	8.0317	8.1518
3 Months	8.3467	8.3214
6 Months	9.3167	9.3196
1 Year	10.2517	10.2696
2 Years	11.3383	11.3433
3 Years	11.8467	11.8517
4 Years	12.4617	12.4717
5 Years	12.8375	12.8598
7 Years	13.3783	13.38
10 Years	13.7333	13.8417
20 Years	14.0042	14.0183
25 Years	14.4193	14.4083

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40GB hard drive
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3/1/1 parts, labor, on-site warranty
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IBM ThinkCentre A50
System Feature
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor 865G
Processor speed 2.8E
800 MHz FSB
Microsoft®Windows® XP Professional
256MB DDR PC2700
40GB hard drive
CD-ROM, Ethernet
3/1/1 parts, labor, on-site warranty
17" CRT Monitor
Express Price PhP51,150† Nav Code 8175PAM

IBM ThinkCentre A50
System Feature
Intel® Pentium® 4 Processor
Processor speed 2.8GHz
400 MHz FSB
Microsoft®Windows® XP Professional
256MB DDR PC2700
40GB hard drive
CD-ROM
3/1/1 parts, labor, on-site warranty
17" CRT Monitor
Express Price PhP47,995† Nav Code 817513A

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Back home—safe and sound

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

THIS will be a short article for reasons that will become apparent. When we returned home from Pattaya on Sunday, I was astonished to see 91 e-mail messages, not from subscribers who knew I was safe, but from readers of the INQUIRER. I answered every one with my one-finger touch-typing and still they continued to pour in on Monday. I would like to thank everyone for their concern, particularly Genesis.

Originally, we planned to go to Singapore and Malaysia, but when my toe became unbearable, I decided that the only sensible course was to settle for a beach holiday. I opted for a nice hotel right on the beach and we had to choose between Phuket and Pattaya, both of which are beautiful. We settled for Pattaya as it is only a bus ride away from Bangkok, whereas Phuket requires another plane trip in an extremely small aircraft. It turned out to be a lucky decision.

I lay by the swimming pool with only a smile and a pair of shorts, hoping to go back looking like Eddie Murphy, but it was not to be and I scarcely got a tan. I wrote an incredibly funny account of our holiday in the same style as the trip to Hong Kong last year. But after the tsunami, which killed about 150,000 people, I deemed it inappropriate to publish it. I know that readers will be disappointed but I hope they will respect my decision. Hence, this relatively short article.

While in Pattaya, I had foot massage and acupressure for five days and at the end of the second session, I walked back four miles to the hotel. After the last session, I walked six miles with little pain so it is a nerve problem, not arthritis. It still does not hurt but I fear it will wear off so I need an electrical device to stimulate the nerves. Are there any suggestions besides a vibrator?

I was honored to receive an invitation to Malacañang, this is not a joke. I advise a charitable foundation, which helps the poor all over the Philippines, particularly in the South. They provide homes for the homeless and help farmers by providing cheap non-toxic fertilizers to grow their crops with a higher yield and in a shorter time. The government acknowledged its contribution to the poor people by an award by Vice President Noli de Castro.

My function is simply to advise on its investments that were held in cash, earning very little. I was asked to manage the fund on a discretionary basis and to avoid unnecessary risk. I promised to make 20 percent, but by using the degree of risk on TEL 4 times, plus a 9-point profit on a day trade on 10 million MPC right at the bottom, I ended the year with a gain of over 50 percent. So everyone was happy, especially as the only remaining investment is a block of FH at an average price of P4.45, including 500,000 at P3.95. I sold a chunk of TEL profitably, as there is a large seller at P1,400.

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the Malacañang invitation. My toe made it impossible to walk from the car park to the main ceremonial hall, and I did not think it proper to appear in a *barong* with open-toe sandals. I cannot wear anything else but I am having the invitation framed.

Before I left, I wrote that there would be the usual window dressing, which duly occurred, but this should top out fairly soon because the risk factor on the Phisix is already 98. The market should fall until the third week of January, after which it should recover ahead of the yearend results due in February. Of course, the actions of the Senate will be an extremely important factor, which could alter the timing.

I also wrote that gold mining shares would dominate the market this year. Since then, LCB, PXB and MAB have risen steadily, particularly the first two. Unfortunately, I do not yet have a risk factor for mines as I need at least 50 days of data and it has not been that long since the Supreme Court gave the go-ahead to foreign investors. I should have it by February. The announcement by the president of the Chamber of Mines that the gestation period between investing and producing was six to seven years caused a correction today.

I also wrote that the other growth area was the call center industry, which is expected to generate $50 billion revenue by 2010. The only listed stock at present is Fil Hispano, which jumped today from P4.65 to P5 on dramatically increased volume. REGIS, CLSA, ABN-Amro and ATR were all buyers and CLSA crossed 4 million shares at the close. Foreign brokers are showing interest for the first time.

In response to several requests, I have added to my newsletter a weekly support/resistance table on 33 stocks together with their short-term trends. On non-volatile stocks such as AC, ALI, SMPH, FPH and MERB, this can be used as a good alternative to the risk factor.

On Thursday, I will be 75, but I hope to keep going for another five years, after which I will run for Pope.

A Happy New Year to all my readers. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Amcham seeks approval of more revenue measures

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE AMERICAN Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines yesterday urged Congress to continue passing new tax measures to address the country's budget deficit problem.

At the same time, AmCham officials said in a statement the group welcomed the passage of a bill that increased taxes on alcohol, cigarettes and tobaccos.

However, AmCham said the approved bill "fails to correct serious tax discrimination that favors low-priced brands to the detriment of higher priced cigarette brands."

"A single tax rate for all kinds and brands of cigarettes would level the playing field for all investors," the group said. This, it added, would enhance the image of the Philippines in the international investing community.

Last month, Congress agreed to raise the price of cigarettes to P25 a pack from P13.44. Brands that sell at P8.96 a pack would be increased to P10.35 while those that sell at P5.60 would go up to P6.35.

Prices of cigarettes belonging to the high-priced category would go up further by 3.6 percent plus 16 centavos every other year.

For alcohol products, the increases would be 30 percent to 50 percent for distilled spirits, 30 percent for wines and 20 percent for fermented liquor. An 8-percent increase every other year would be imposed in 2007, 2009 and 2011.

The new law is expected to raise P17.5 billion in additional revenue for the government yearly.

AmCham said the law on the so-called sin taxes—along with increased efforts to collect existing taxes, raise fees, eliminate losses of the National Power Corp. and tighter controls on public sector spending—should help improve the government's "worrisome" fiscal situation.

Further, AmCham pushed for other measures such as those on lateral attrition, rationalization of investment incentives, petroleum tax increases and elimination of exemptions from the value-added tax.

The proposed measures, along with the sin taxes, were being pushed by Malacañang in an effort to raise revenues and pare down the budget gap.

URC unit to issue $100M in 5-yr debt notes

A FOREIGN subsidiary of Gokongwei-owned Universal Robina Corp. (URC) will embark on roadshow here and overseas, specifically in Singapore and Hong Kong, starting today to drum up investor interest in a planned debt notes issuance.

The company hopes to raise $100 million through the issuance of five-year fixed-rate notes to refinance the food group's obligations that are falling due in 2006 and fund working capital, industry sources said.

The sources told the INQUIRER that the URC Group would offer its notes to investors in Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines this week and early next week.

URC said wholly owned subsidiary, British Virgin Islands-registered URC Philippines Ltd., would issue the fixed rate notes.

Investment banks Credit Suisse First Boston (Europe) and JP Morgan Securities Ltd. were tapped as joint issue managers of the notes offering.

URC will act as the guarantor of the notes. The board of URC has authorized its management to determine the extent of its participation as guarantor, URC corporate secretary Rosalinda Rivera said in a disclosure yesterday.

Sources said URC would use proceeds of the proposed debt offer to refinance outstanding loans of around $60 million due on Dec. 19, 2006. The said obligation stemmed from a $100-million guaranteed notes issue in 1996 by Universal Robina (Cayman) Ltd., another wholly owned subsidiary.

URC gears up for an aggressive regional expansion, earmarking roughly $25 million for its manufacturing lines in Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam. URC is planning to increase its biscuit factory capacity in Thailand this quarter.

It is also expanding its chocolate and snacks plant capacity in Indonesia and candy manufacturing activities in Vietnam. URC earlier said it was planning to open a new food manufacturing plant in Hanoi, Vietnam, early this year. Encouraged by the sharp growth of Vietnam's economy, URC has decided to set up shop there to manufacture snacks, biscuits and candies, sources said. URC has opened a commercial office in Ho Chi Minh City.

Aside from Vietnam, URC has manufacturing plants in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia and China. It maintains commercial offices in Singapore and Hong Kong.

URC would also expand distribution lines in other cities in China. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

S&P sees lowering of Aussie dairy firm's credit rating

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PLANNED takeover by San Miguel Corp., Southeast Asia's largest food and beverage firm, of Australia's National Foods Ltd. may erode the dairy giant's credit rating, according to international credit ratings firm Standard & Poor's Rating Services.

In a statement, Standard & Poor's Ratings Services said the CreditWatch on National Foods' "BBB" corporate credit rating and bank loan rating was revised to "developing" from "positive."

The CreditWatch revision follows the submission of San Miguel's bid to acquire the Australian company last Dec. 30.

Standard & Poor's said National Foods' rating was placed on CreditWatch "with positive implications on Oct. 28" after New Zealand's Fonterra Cooperative Group Ltd. made an offer to buy the company.

National Foods' board unanimously recommended the San Miguel offer in the absence of a superior proposal.

"The CreditWatch with developing implications reflects uncertainty as to the eventual ownership of National Foods and whether the impact on its credit quality would be positive or negative," Brenda Wardlaw, Standard & Poor's credit analyst, said in the statement.

"If San Miguel will be successful in gaining control of National Foods, the rating on National Foods will likely be lowered," Wardlaw added.

San Miguel earlier announced its A$1.78-billion ($1.37 billion) bid to acquire National Foods. The offer is equivalent to A$6 a share. This topped the A$5.45 a share offer submitted by Fonterra.

San Miguel's offer also represented a 28.5 percent premium to the Australian firm's closing price before Fonterra launched its bid in late October.

National Foods is Australia's biggest milk processor. Its products include milk, yoghurt, gourmet cheese and cream. In a disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange, the board of National Foods unanimously backed San Miguel's offer and recommended that stockholders accept the offer in the absence of a superior proposal. National Foods has rejected the unsolicited offer of Fonterra.

US Fed action may prompt BSP tightening

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said the December inflation rate was "within expectations" and was not likely to prompt any monetary tightening in next week's policy rate setting meeting of the Monetary Board.

However, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura admitted that with the expected tightening by the US Federal Reserve next month, the BSP might have to take "some measured action" in the near future.

Buenaventura said the BSP's department of economic research was still evaluating whether the second round of inflationary pressure was affecting consumer demand in the country.

Demand pressures come in when consumers spend more, usually when they lose the incentive to keep their money in savings instruments due to low interest rates. It is under such a condition that monetary authorities are prompted to intervene through monetary tightening.

A monetary tightening, which aims to siphon off liquidity, is done either through an increase in the reserve requirement on banks or a hike in key interest rates.

For this month, Buenaventura said there was likely no need to resort to any tightening measure.

Buenaventura noted that the higher inflation in December was mainly caused by supply side pressures, particularly food, beverage, tobacco, vegetables and oil.

Based on the 1994 consumer price index, he said the full-year average of 5.5 percent was only a bit higher than the 4-5 percent target.

It was also within the BSP's projected range of 7.6-8.1 percent for the month.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 5, 2005)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	27	27.5	26.5	27	786,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	53.5	54	53	54	789,400
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48	48	48	3,700
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.41	0.43	0.41	0.43	1,430,000
International Exch. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	102,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26.5	26.5	26	26.5	402,100
Philippine National Bank	23	23	23	23	16,000
Security Bank Corp.	29.5	30.5	29.5	30.5	6,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	16,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2520	2520	2520	2520	30
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	14,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1830	1845	1830	1845	280
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	8,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.78	1.82	1.74	1.8	22,168,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	940	955	940	955	5,130
Ipeople Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	12,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.65	2.9	2.65	2.85	42,821,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1390	1390	1380	1390	554,520
Ivantage Corp.	0.62	0.64	0.62	0.62	2,240,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	13,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16	15.75	15.75	15,300
Manila Electric Co. B	25.5	26	25.5	25.5	430,700
Petron Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	947,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	108,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.9	6	5.9	6	33,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	30,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.18	31,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	70,000
Union Cement Corp.	2.12	2.24	2.12	2.24	6,493,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	557,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31	31	31	252,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28.5	28.5	28	28.5	9,600
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	10,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	190,000
San Miguel Corp. A	59.5	59.5	59	59.5	135,700
San Miguel Corp. B	80	80	79.5	80	164,900
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	11	11	11	11	243,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	270,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	0.0046	11,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.9	7	6.9	7	7,405,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	96,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,600,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.56	1.56	457,000
APC Group Inc.	0.08	0.105	0.08	0.09	8,600,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	21,000,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	7,000
Bhi Holdings Inc.	210	210	210	210	720
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.69	8,970,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	270,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.215	560,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.12	0.135	0.12	0.13	2,400,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.7	1,584,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	44,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	5	5.3	5	5.3	3,360,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	31.5	31.5	31	31.5	479,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	100,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	236,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.44	2.48	2.42	2.42	520,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	355,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	20,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.37	0.38	0.37	0.37	35,250,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	50,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	20,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	300,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	100,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	47,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	70,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	2,430,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.96	0.99	0.96	0.98	530,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	18.25	18.25	18.25	18.25	22,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.9	6.9	6.7	6.7	6,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.7	7,093,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.245	0.25	5,070,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	1,000,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	2,400,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	7,814,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	60,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	50,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	50,000
SM Development Corp.	1.4	1.42	1.38	1.4	750,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	8	8	8,740,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co., Inc. A	0.43	0.45	0.43	0.45	110,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	147,800,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.2	4.2	4	4	381,000
Benguet Corp. A	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	1,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	33,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.4	0.42	0.37	0.41	58,500,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.47	0.5	0.46	0.48	22,840,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	396,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.027	176,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	33,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.78	0.81	0.76	0.8	3,630,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.78	0.83	0.78	0.81	20,650,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.18	0.19	0.16	0.19	400,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.0095	0.0095	0.009	0.0095	28,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0046	0.0048	0.0046	0.0048	16,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	6,000,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	30,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	500,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	3,545,910	77,521,045.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	198,887,770	1,118,843,980.00
PRO	33,127,000	136,800,310.00
Mining	860,045,000	70,176,700.00
OIL	61,530,000	498,900.00
GRAND TOTALS :	1,157,135,680	1,403,840,935.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	547.78	UP 4.67
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,893.89	UP 4.92
PRO	711.42	DOWN 5.47
Mining	3,273.52	UP 29.62
OIL	1.88	UP 0.05
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	1,173.67	DOWN 12.56
Composite	1,875.37	UP 2.30

NO. OF ADVANCES: 25, NO. OF DECLINES: 27, NO. OF UNCHANGED: 50, NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 102, NO. OF TRADES: 3,358

DISCLOSURES

METRO Alliance Holdings and Equities Corp. will negotiate for the sale of some 329 million shares of stock of Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.

* * *

DMCI Holdings Inc. reported that 600 preferred shares redeemed for December would be delisted effective Jan. 5, bringing the company's outstanding preferred shares to 156,740.

* * *

CHONA Ferrer has been appointed first vice president of Universal Robina Corp.

* * *

URC PHILIPPINES, an offshore subsidiary of Universal Robina, plans to issue fixed-rate notes amounting to $100 million, with a minimum tenor of five years.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. disclosed the listing of 1,242 common shares for Jan. 6, bringing the number of shares listed under the company's executive stock option plan to 335,096. ***Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research***

December inflation ...

From page B1

the Pacific (UA&P), agreed with Neri, saying increases in the prices of consumer products were expected to decelerate in January. "Producers will not be able to sustain the growth of their businesses if they will continue to increase prices significantly," he said in a briefing yesterday on UA&P's economic outlook for 2005.

Villegas said oil prices would likely stabilize and hit a low of $30 a barrel. He said, however, that inflation might begin hitting new highs in the second half of 2005 when demand would start rising again and when the agriculture sector would begin feeling the effects of the El Niño weather phenomenon.

Villegas said the best way to address inflation was for the government to be aggressive in its programs to develop irrigation and post-harvest facilities in the agricultural areas.

Praying with fire

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

TODAY'S topic has something to do with the latest spin of this cute, financially-hobbling administration of Gloriaetta. And that is, of course, graft and corruption.

On the very first working day of the year, the Palace spin doctors announced that this cute administration was promising to do something about graft and corruption. Again!

Now, somewhere down in our fat government bureaucracy is an outfit called the Bureau of Fire Protection, or the BFP.

It is the office which buys the equipment of all the government-employed firefighters all over the country.

They are different from the "volunteer" firefighters, who do not receive any pay, supposedly, and who get their equipment from sponsors, mainly coming from business.

Just exactly how a lot of the equipment of government fire fighters, which were paid for with our taxes, ended up with the volunteers, is one deep mystery of the universe.

***

ACTUALLY, many in the BFP suspect that government firefighters are actually selling their gears to the "volunteers."

I mean, everybody in the bureau knows that such a "fire sale" is happening all the time.

Now, do you still wonder why the government firefighters do not have the necessary equipment most of the time?

***

JUST recently, the same bureau held a public bidding for the supply of a certain gear for firefighting. It is called "firefighter's coat," which every fireman should have as his work tool.

It is as much a necessity for fireman as the box is for Gloriaetta, which is something she can stand on at the podium when she delivers a speech.

In preliminary bidding conferences, the BFP informed the prospective suppliers that it only had—exactly—P10.4 million for the acquisition of firefighter's coats this year.

In other words, the bidders would have to work on such a figure, specifying in their bids how many coats they could supply with the limited budget.

Several companies came forward to offer their products. As in any government bidding, nevertheless, the requirements of the BFP's bid and awards committee, or the BAC, were quite tedious.

For instance, the BFP committee required the bidders to submit some 24 annexes to their qualifications.

Not only that, some 80 percent of the annexes should be notarized. No wonder a lot of the prospective suppliers gave up.

In the end, the BFP pre-qualified only three of them. They were Aurasys, 911 Alarm, and Panpisco. One of them has been a long-time, er, "favorite" of the committee.

***

FROM what I gathered, Panpisco beat the other two qualifiers quite handily. All right—very convincingly!

You see, Panpisco offered to supply the BFP with 807 firefighter's coats for its exact limited budget of P10.4 million.

The next highest bidder was the company called "911 Alarm," with 456 coats, followed by Aurasys, with 400 coats.

With those figures, at least to the guys down here in my barangay, it should be easy to decide which of the bidders should get the supply contract.

For the same amount of money, BFP could get from the Panpisco bid almost double the number of coats from the other bidders.

That is still a lot of coats for the government firefighters who sometimes wear nothing but T-shirts when they are trying to save our houses.

It should be an easy choice, but unfortunately, it was not for the bureau.

***

ALL of a sudden, the BFP bidding committee ruled a TKO against Panpisco, invoking some arithmetical quirk, common in this modern day of electronic data processing.

Apparently, Panpisco figured that it should simply divide the P10.4-million budget with the number of coats (which was 807 coats), and it should get a price of P12,887.24 per coat.

That is the unit price which Panpisco wrote down on its bid.

But computer software programs always round off figures to the hundredths (meaning, two decimal places) for currencies, whether in euros, dollars, or depreciated pesos.

In other words, without the rounding-off, the actual result of the division should have been higher than the unit price submitted by Panpisco to the bureau.

The price should be higher by a microscopic fraction of a centavo— something like 0.0032 centavo, which does not exist in the real world. The lowest denomination of the Philippine peso is still P0.01 or one centavo.

That's why all computer software programs compute currencies up to two decimal places.

But the BFP apparently does not like bidders to use computers. It disqualified Panpisco because of the glitch.

***

IN a stroke of bid-rigging brilliance, the BFP did some arithmetic with the bid of Panpisco. It reversed the process. It multiplied instead the unit price of Panpisco (which was P12,887.24) with the number of coats (which was 807).

Voila— the result was a total bid price of more than the bureau's exact budget of P10.4 million. It was higher by an amazing P2.60 - rounding-off applied.

Still, Panpisco submitted a bid of P10.4 million—exactly. It did not submit a bid of P10, 400,002.60.

Why the committee disregarded the total bid price of Panpisco, as it did its own arithmetic, is a mystery which nobody in the bureau can as yet explain.

So what if Panpisco made a microscopic mistake? Its mistake, actually, is a gain to the government. It is giving the government a discount of P2.60.

Somebody in the bureau actually suggested to the bidding committee that it should be the way to look at the Panpisco bid— that it is giving the government a discount.

But, despite the huge difference in the number of coats which the government can get, the committee insisted on its arithmetical findings. It is awarding the contract to the losing bidder.

If that is not hair splitting, this cute administration is the champion graftbuster in the whole wide world.

***

WELL, the BFP is the same bureau which became famous for its acquisition of overpriced fire trucks some years ago.

The bureau chief is still serving his second suspension for graft cases filed against him by his own people. Oh, there are only 11 of them. I mean the cases!

Word goes around in the bureau that the composition of the bidding committee was never changed even after the suspension of the bureau chief.

Today, it has the same guys who were responsible for awarding overpriced contracts in the past.

Unfortunately for Panpisco, it is just an old company, having been established more than 50 years ago, which happens to be a newcomer in the lucrative supply business in the fire bureau.

It has no connections to somebody who is said to be the most influential person in the bidding committee, somebody whose name starts with a "C."

Let's pray that the boys of Gloriaetta can do something about this anomaly at the fire bureau.

The BFP is playing with fire here.

Unfortunately, who gets hurt in the end, who will die when fires break out for lack of firefighting equipment, will not be the BFP guys. Guess who!

OWNERS of this new car may soon pay more registration fees.

Gov't to increase car registration fees

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

NEW vehicle buyers will pay three years worth of registration fees, instead of the current annual rate, to raise at least P1.2 billion in new revenues and help the Arroyo administration reduce its budget deficit.

In a briefing in Malacañang, Land Transportation Office (LTO) chief Annalie Lontoc said the new fee schedule was a boon not only to the government, but also for vehicle owners who currently have to renew their vehicles' registration every year.

The LTO based its projected revenue increase on the local automotive industry's sales, that were projected to hit 87,000 last year.

Lontoc said light vehicles were each charged P1,600 in annual registration fees; medium-sized vehicles P3,600; heavy vehicles P8,000; and motorcycles P240.

"They would have to pay for three years (worth of) registration fees if they buy a new vehicle this year," said Lontoc who noted that the government already held a public hearing for the plan.

Lontoc said the government had also considered extending the three-year registration fees on used vehicles, but this was immediately shot down by officials on concerns that there was no way to ensure their roadworthiness for more than a year.

Most new vehicles sold in the country have warranties that extend up to three years, or mileage of 50,000 kilometers.

Aside from advancing registration fees payments from brand new vehicle owners, Lontoc said the LTO planned to raise driver's licenses fees, although no decision has yet been reached on how much fees would be raised and when these would take effect.

These adjustments of government fees are part of the government's on-going drive to squeeze out more revenues to address the fiscal crisis.

The widening budget gap is considered the single biggest challenge facing the Arroyo administration.

Concerns over the failure of the government to pass crucial tax bills to narrow the budget gap had caused international rating agencies to consider downgrading the Philippines' sovereign credit rating.

A downgrade would mean higher interest expenses for the government and companies seeking fresh funds.

UA&P ECONOMISTS' FORECAST

Services to drive 2005 growth

By Michelle V. Remo

THE SERVICES sector will drive economic growth this year, according to economists from the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Harnessing its strength, however, will depend on the country's ability to make its high level of competence known in the global market.

"We already have what it takes to allow the services sector to boom. All we have to do is put our acts together in preparing the country (to accommodate higher demand)," said UA&P economist Winston Padojing in a press briefing yesterday.

Padojing said the "sunrise" businesses this year include: health, wellness, and beauty services; retirement homes; information and communications technology services, which include contact centers; medical and legal operations; and finance and accounting services.

According to UA&P projections, the services sector will grow a robust 6.2 percent this year, from the projected 5.9 percent in 2004.

The 2005 growth projection for the services sector exceeds that of the industry at 4.8 percent, and agriculture at 3.5 percent.

Padojing, however, said the Philippines must do a better job at promoting the country as a hub for wealth, wellness and beauty services in the region.

The industry is vibrant, he said, but most clients are still locals.

"Thailand, which has fewer workers than the Philippines, has been able to attract 800,000 tourists in a year largely because of its health and beauty services. What more the Philippines, which even sends health practitioners abroad?" Padojing said.

Companies worldwide have also taken the strategy of outsourcing some of their functions to reduce cost.

This will continue to benefit outsourced services, such as accounting, finance, and will further boost the business of contact centers, said Padojing.

Bernardo Villegas, also a UA&P economist, said the growth of the services sector would offset the expected declines in the output of the agriculture and industry sectors, which would likely result in a decline in the growth of the Gross Domestic Product.

Villegas said GDP growth will slow down to 5.2 percent this year, from the projected 6.1 percent in 2004, mainly due to the El Niño weather phenomenon, and the impending increase in taxes, which will dampen spending.

He added that the lifting of the quota system for garments exports and the expected decline in global demand for electronics will affect the garments and electronics industries —the country's two biggest export earners.

Villegas said exports for 2005 will only reach around 8 percent, short of the government target of 10 percent. With the lackluster scenario for exports, Villegas said the Philippines could bank on its potentials on the services sector to ease impact of lower export earnings, and lower agriculture production due to El Niño.

The economist also said the tourism industry was likely to gain from the tsunamis that hit South Asian countries.

He said various tourist spots, such as in Cebu and Palawan are already receiving numerous bookings from foreign tourists, who are expected to arrive between March and July.

PSALM to bid out idle Napocor power plants

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER finalizing the sale of five National Power Corp. plants last year, the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) is now set to auction off the power firm's idle plants, starting with the 200-megawatt (MW) Manila Thermal Power Plant.

In a bid invitation published yesterday, the government firm asked interested firms to submit their letters of intent by 5 p.m. of Jan. 14 to qualify for the bidding.

The due diligence study will last from Jan. 10 to Feb. 14, to be followed by a pre-bid conference on Jan. 19.

The deadline for submission of bids has been scheduled for Feb. 18.

All prospective bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10 percent of the total bid price, in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit from an accredited local bank.

PSALM vice president for asset valuation and disposal Froilan Tampinco said in a statement yesterday that the sale of the idle or decommissioned plant would follow the open and competitive bidding method used in the auctions of the five Napocor generation assets last year.

"Capitalizing on the momentum from last year's successful bidding for five hydroelectric plants and the Masinloc coal-fired plant, we are starting this year with the sale of decommissioned plants, beginning with the Manila Thermal Power Plant," PSALM president Raphael Lotilla said.

"Manila Thermal's components have been kept in such good condition by Napocor personnel that they can also be used as replacement parts for operational plants. But we are also taking advantage of the good market for scrap metal to obtain optimal value for government," he added.

Tampinco likewise said that all major systems of the plant were still intact, with major equipment like its generating unit still in good condition.

After the Manila Thermal plant, PSALM will sell the 54-MW Cebu II plant in March, the 22.3-MW General Santos plant in April and the 104-MW Aplaya plant in May.

PSALM has so far sold five plants—four hydroelectric and one coal-fired.

These are the 35-MW Talomo plant in Davao for $1.37 million, the 1.6-MW Agusan plant in Bukidnon for $1.53 million, the 1.8-MW Barit plant in Camarines Sur for $480,000, the 0.4-MW Cawayan plant in Sorsogon for US$410,410, the 1.2-MW Loboc plant in Bohol for $1.42 million, and the 600-MW Masinloc coal-fired plant in Zambales for $561.74 million.

Rollback in local oil prices seen this month

From page B1

and refined petroleum products.

Under EO 336, the levy on crude and refined petroleum product imports will be jacked up to 5 percent starting Jan. 1 from only 3 percent.

Perez said the increase in import tariff would rake in an additional P5.5 billion a year for the government.

"Our computations show that the increase in import tariff, equivalent to an average 36-38 centavos a liter, will hardly be felt by our consumers as we saw world oil prices falling sharply last month," he said.

"In fact, if prices remain at present levels, it is even possible that a price rollback could be made within the month, most probably in gasoline," he added.

He urged local oil firms to give respite to consumers by immediately reflecting in their pump prices the drop in world oil prices despite the tariff rate increase.

The tariff adjustment serves as an interim revenue-generating measure for the government while bills on additional petroleum taxes are being deliberated in Congress.

Meanwhile, world oil prices are seen to remain stable despite election jitters in Iraq and other external factors that may again affect oil prices.

Inventories in major economies like the United States are currently high enough at around 27 million barrels beginning in the fourth quarter of 2004, according to New York-based PIRA Energy Group.

This crude stock is expected to hit 49 million barrels in the coming months.

IMF experts push late bailout of ailing banks

From page B1

To prevent such an economy-wide loss of confidence, the paper said the government may need to reassure depositors that there would be no liquidity shortage in the future.

"For this, the government may, by closing illiquid banks today, save sufficient liquidity to bail out all the illiquid banks in the future. In contrast, other forms of partial bailout may fail to maintain confidence," it said.

At the start of a crisis, the paper said it would be better for the government to refrain from bailing out banks facing early shocks and focus its entire effort on ensuring the survival of those that are exposed to late shocks.

"We found that such a strategy of retaining the ability to bail out banks that face late distress is not only optimal when the government's fiscal resources are limited but would receive political support from constituents who would face higher taxes if the government were to extend a commitment to a complete bailout of all potentially distressed banks," the paper said. *Doris C. Dumlao*

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3 months	3.000%	3.250%	3.500%
6 months	3.250%	3.250%	3.500%
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Editor Aries Espinosa

Starcom Philippines bags another global award

STARCOM Philippines, Procter & Gamble's Media Agency Of Record, ends 2004 with a historical bang, winning back to back awards for its phenomenal "Sunod Sa Galaw" music and dance marketing campaign for Rejoice Shampoo.

Just at the heels of the 2004 P&G Global Brand Building Awards win as Best Media Team, Starcom Philippines made history yet another time with the Rejoice Sunod Sa Galaw campaign reaping top honors at the 2004 Global SMG Fuel Awards, held last Dec. 13, in Florida, USA. A yearly event of the Starcom Media Group (SMG) global network, the Fuel Awards reviews over 100 media campaigns developed by its global network. The Philippines received three (3) major awards. One was a Jury Award for Ariel Laundry Soap "Isang Babad Ka Lang" (Just One Soak) campaign, which recognizes media initiatives which greatly contributed to brand building. The other two was for the Rejoice campaign: the Pillar Award for Best in Contact Innovation, which recognizes the campaigns creative way of communicating to its target market, and the Grand Prix Award, the highest award given for an overall win. The Starcom Philippines office received the most number of awards during this event.

The winning campaign, "Sunod Sa Galaw" (Follows Your Every Move), leveraged on the Filipino's fervent love for music and the recent trend of novelty hits in the Filipino pop culture. Together with P&G, Starcom tapped the country's famed novelty hit maker to develop a Rejoice song. With a catchy dance step to match, a music video was released featuring fast-rising teen stars. This was followed by a succession of media-based activities: the "Sunod Sa Galaw Girl" Dance Contest in a leading noontime variety show, downloadable cellphone ring tones of the song, mall-based dance contests and shows, airplay on the radio, and a promotional CD which turned Gold Record. Soon, Rejoice "Sunod Sa Galaw" became a nationwide dance craze with Filipinos-from celebrities to your man on the street-doing the signature Rejoice dance moves and singing the song.

Overall, the campaign delivered record awareness, recall, trial and usage scores with Rejoice posting the highest market share in 6 years.

Bernard Glock, P&G VP Global for Media, confers "It is a great example of having our Media organization (Starcom(be at the forefront of creating multi-touchpoint marketing innovation."

LIZELLE G. Maralag (middle), managing director of Starcom Philippines, receives the 2004 Grand Prix from Jack Klues (right) CEO Starcom MediaVest Group, with Jaswinder Kaur (left) from the SMG Regional Headquarters.

GIANT NUEVA PAELLA

Navin Sadarangani (right), marketing manager of Gurnamal Sons and Didi R. Belonio (left), market development manager of DuPont Philippines, recently led culinary chefs from the Century Tuna Culinary Club in cooking up a super-sized seafood paella on a giant DuPont Teflon non-stick fry pan. The cooking session was staged at the Meyer Cookware Festival held during the Women's World Exhibit at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. Special Teflon cookwares from Meyer were raffled off after the show as the visitors savored the feast. The group also distributed leaflets of the Century Tuna Nueva Paella recipe developed by Donna Garcia, Aleli Fermin and Allen Demaala, chefs of the Century Tuna Culinary Club.

The coconut production facility that could

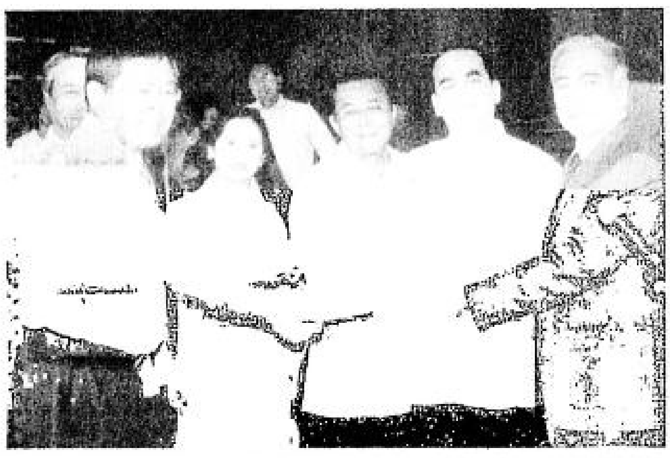
ABOUT 100 kilometers south of the city of Manila lies the single largest coconut production facility in a 13-hectare sprawling coconut plantation. Complete with its very own hospital, recreational facilities and managers' residences, this coconut production facility that could, continues to generate jobs and put the little town of Candelaria, Barrio Pahinga Quezon Province, in the global map.

Contrary to its name, this coconut town never sleeps. With 58 years of manufacturing experience in anything and everything that can be made from coconuts, Peter Paul Philippine Corporation, a purely Filipino managed company has grown to be the global supplier of choice by being the only ISO 9001:2000 and HACCP certified local supplier of coconut products. Desiccated coconut, coconut milk and cream, coconut water, copra, copra cake, coconut oil, paring cake, paring oil and other residual products' processing system all undergo rigid inspection and testing to ensure Product Quality Assurance. To date, Peter Paul's products are seen in all major markets such as North and South America, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, supplying established name brands: Hershey, Cadbury, Mars, Nabisco, Nestle, Nissin and Quaker Oats.

Joey T. Quimson, Peter Paul's president is not resting on these laurels. The latest quality product to come off their shelves, known as the "Healthiest Oil on Earth", is the Pure & Clear Virgin Coconut Oil. Touting that having a strong immune system is the surest way to health, Pure & Clear is processed only under strictly hygienic conditions to guarantee that all the (delete enzymes) lauric acid and other immune building nutrients are retained. "Lauric acid", the oil's magic ingredient, is identical to a special group of fats found in human breast milk, discovered to be an energy booster, which aids in weight loss, in the reduction of the risks of cancer and heart disease and in the prevention of osteoporosis and premature aging.

Having the largest single production facility, Peter Paul's Pure & Clear Virgin Coconut Oil is distributed to all leading supermarkets in the country starting with the 24 branches of SM Supermarkets nationwide, including Southsupermarket in Alabang, Malolos, Pasig and Pioneer Center, Sikat Pinoy Multipurpose Cooperative, Connies Kitchen, Makati Supermarket, Liberty Duty Free, Johnny's Pampanga and Medman Convenient Store.

This "miracle oil" has proven that once again; the coconut is indeed a giant nut and that Peter Paul Philippine Corp, is the giant nutcracker.


UNILAB WINS BIR CENTENNIAL TAXPAYER AWARD

United Laboratories Inc (Unilab) was cited by the Bureau of International Revenue (BIR) as among the country's top taxpayers under its Centennial Taxpayers Recognition Program (CTRP) in simple awarding rites at the BIR National Office last Dec. 20. Receiving the award from BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. is Unilab president and COO Carlos Ejercito, with (from left) VP for corporate affairs Rhals Gamboa, CVP for organization development Imelda Centeno, SVP for finance and treasury Apolonio Matic Jr. and VP for supply chain planning Clinton Hess.

SM CINEMA WINS 2004 SHOPPERS CHOICE AWARD

The SM Megamall Cinema was named Best Cinema by the 2004 National Shoppers Choice Award. Known for its great mix of homegrown hits and Hollywood blockbusters, red carpet premieres, state of the art cinemaplexes and cutting edge film festivals, SM Cinema has become a favorite destination of film enthusiasts. The National Shoppers Choice Award aims to recognize companies that excel in their various fields, at the same time paying tribute to entrepreneurs, businessmen and managers who make these companies work. Shown are SM's assistant operation manager Lyka Ugarte and theater manager Anton Calugay receive the best theater in Metro Manila award for SM Megamall from vice president of Philippine Marketing Association Felix Yao and president of Certified Professional Marketers Society during the National Shoppers Choice Award 2004.

MAIL AND MORE OPENS IN ROBINSON'S PIONEER

FedEx PBA player Ren-ren Ritualo is now a proud owner of Mail and More Global Business Center in Robinson's Pioneer. Mail and More is the authorized ship center of FedEx for international courier services, and Air21 for its domestic. In photo (from left): coach Joe Lipa of FedEx Express; Baby Ritualo; Cons del Rosario, president of Mail and More Business Services Inc; Ren-ren Ritualo; and Beng Pangan, VP for Customer Service, Sales and Marketing of Airfreight 2100 Inc.

Bits Clips

G2 Show '05

MMOG Phils Corp is accepting applications for exhibition space in the Philippines' first ever technology fair - the Games and Gadgets Show 2005 (G2 Show). The G2 Show will take place on Jan. 7 to 9 at the Megatrade Hall and will showcase audio, automotive technology, broadband, digital entertainment and imaging, embedded technologies, home theater, mobile electronics, telecommunication, video and wireless application products and services. A highlight of the fair will be the G2 Show People's Choice Awards, meant to recognize the best new technology consumer products debuting at the show. Companies interested in participating the G2 Show 2005 can contact MMOG Phils at 400-6077 or 525-8839 or visit www.g2show.com.ph.

Circulan 4-in-1 promo

MAGANDANG Umagang Bayan (MUB), in cooperation with Macropharma Corp, local distributor of Circulan 4-in-1 Dietary Herbal Supplement, excites your morning with Circulan 4-in-1 "Door Knocks". Every week, MUB's Iron Man Louie "Lakwatsero" will visit various barangays to give you the chance to win on the spot cash prizes. Instant P6,000 will be given to selected households as soon as an empty Circulan banig or blister pack is presented to the Iron Man and an additional P1,000 when you say Circulan's magic word "Nasa dugo lang yan!". Also, weekly raffle draws are held at MUB every Thursday where bigger cash prizes awaits loyal consumers. Just send your empty Circulan blister packs, complete with the required details: name, birthday, sex, home or office address, cellphone number, date and signature and send to MCPO Box 2358 Makati City 1263 or drop entries at selected Mercury Drug stores. Lucky entries can win cash prizes from P15,000, P10,000, P5,000, P1,000 - for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and consolation prizes, respectively and up to P500,000 for the grand raffle draw on Jan. 7.

Fitness First: Aid for Asia

FITNESS First, the leading fitness club operator in Asia with 40 clubs and over 400 worldwide, will be collaborating efforts across all its clubs to help raise donations to aid victims of the Asia Tsunami crisis, with a target of raising not less than $100,000. All Fitness First clubs that are in strategic locations in major cities and suburban towns across the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong and China will have donation boxes at each club reception; and Fitness First members and the public are welcomed and encouraged to visit the clubs to drop off donations which will be donated to the local chapters of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Members or the public who need the locations of the clubs can visit the respective websites: Philippines - www.fitnessfirst.com.ph; Malaysia - www.fitnessfirst.com.my; Thailand - www.fitnessfirst.com.th; Singapore - www.fitnessfirst.com.sg; China and Hong Kong - www.fitnessfirst.com.hk.

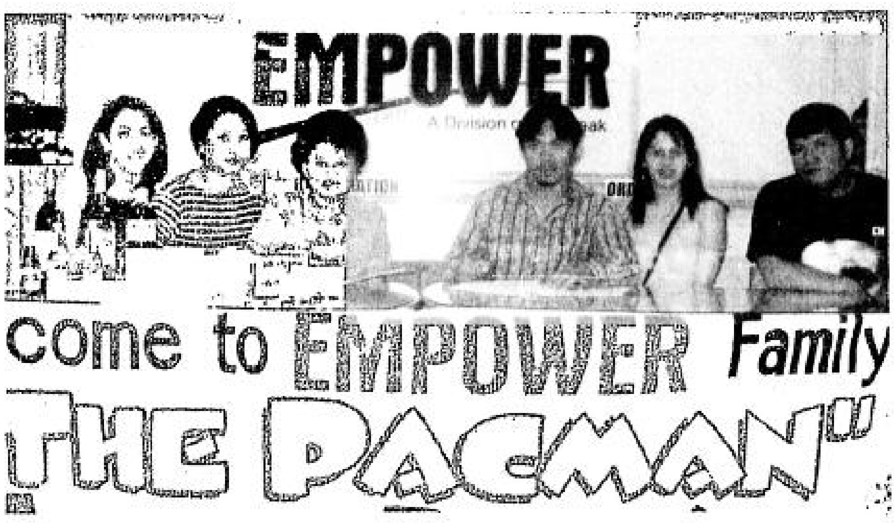
PSGP Foundation forum

THE PARKINSON'S Support Group of the Philippines (PSGP) Foundation will be holding its next meeting on Jan. 9, (Sunday) at 12 p.m. at the 14th floor auditorium of the Cathedral Heights Building Complex (CHBC) South Tower of St. Luke's. The meeting is free and open to the public, and is being sponsored by Boehringer-Ingelheim and St. Luke's Medical Center. For the upcoming meeting, one of the leading dermatologists, Dr. Jonathan Dizon, will be reviewing the various dermatological conditions that patients with Parkinson's disease or parkinsonism experience, as well as some common dermatological problems in the general population. The lecture will be followed by an open forum, where the audience is encouraged to ask questions. For more information, interested parties can contact the PSGP at 631-1531 or the Movement Disorders Center of St. Luke's at 727-5552.

PDI PHOTO-BETOY JOHNSON

DIAMOND LABORATORIES AT 20

Diamond Laboratories, the top health and slimming tea distributor in the country today (e.g. Kankunis, Kancura, Sinoman, Bavarian Brew, Lee MF Rhino, Genial Daw, Gang Xian etc) celebrated its 20th anniversary last Nov. 26. The humble festivity was simultaneously held with the inauguration of the company vacation house at Royale Tagaytay Estates, Tagaytay City. Shown are (from left): J. Clod Estalilla, Profetiza Cabrera and Roberto Cabrera Jr., founder and chair, leading the ribbon cutting ceremony. Also in photo are the distinguished members of the management committee (from left) Edrich Cabrera, president and general manager; Roberto Cabrera III, VP for admin and personnel; Jason Cabrera, VP for finance and Rodel Reyes, VP for manufacturing.



'THE PACMAN' JOINS THE EMPOWER FAMILY

World-renowned boxer, Manny 'The Pacman' Pacquiao (third from right), joins Empower as endorser of its high-quality, all-Filipino made herbal products. Empower is a 100 percent Filipino-owned direct-selling company engaged in the development, manufacture and sale of effective food supplements derived from local herbs. Pacquiao, who strongly believes in the Filipinos' ingenuity, salutes Empower's mission in helping Filipinos achieve better health, which at the same time, provides them with a sustainable source of livelihood through direct-selling. Empower's product line includes nutritionals like ampalaya-based supplements, health drinks, herbal ointment and herbal toothpaste, with more products currently being developed. Shown in photo during the contract signing is Empower's management, represented by (from left): Malou B. dela Cruz, vice president for sales and business development; Josephine G. Elicaño, senior vice president; and, Josefina M. Elicaño, president and chief operating officer. His wife, Jinkee, and friend-trainer, Buboy Fernandez, join Pacquiao. For queries, contact Empower's Network Hotline at 534-3414.

Globe Kababayan launches Quick Remit and Load Card for OFWs and their families

FOR THE approximately eight million Filipinos living and working abroad, the mobile phone has become an indispensable part of their lives, bridging geographical distances and strengthening family ties. As Globe Handyphone's service arm for the OFW community, Globe Kababayan understands how clear and constant communication brings comfort and peace of mind, and is committed to enriching the connectivities that bring OFWs and their families together.

To ensure that their families are just a phone call or text away, OFWs have taken to sending them prepaid call card credits or by remitting extra cash to be used for the sole purpose of reloading their mobile phones. Globe Kababayan's latest breakthrough product, the Quick Remit and Load card, which will be manufactured and distributed internationally by Paysetter Inc, enables OFWs to remit cash as well as reload their loved ones' phones at the same time! Available in affordable increments of P1,200, P3,200, and P5,200, Quick Remit and Load gives OFWs the option of remitting and reloading, anytime or anywhere - no queuing at overseas remittance centers, no over-the-counter payment of expensive cable fees, and no more waiting for days-off to remit money. Better yet, the Quick Remit and Load card allows OFWs to apportion their remittances according to specific needs of the different members of their family.

All an OFW has to do is buy a Quick Remit and Load card from selected Filipino establishments in Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, scratch the sealed portion of the card to reveal a 9-digit Card and 6-digit PIN numbers, and then using their own mobile phones abroad, send these numbers plus the recipient's Globe Prepaid or Touch Mobile number to a universal access number. In a few seconds, the recipient in the Philippines will receive a text message confirming both the remittance and prepaid reload transactions. A fixed prepaid load amount of P150 will be credited to the Globe Handyphone or Touch Mobile account of the recipient, regardless of the card denomination purchased.

Quick Remit and Load card remittances are in the form of G-Cash, Globe's m-commerce currency that can be used for remittances, person-to-person (P2P) money transfer, and purchases and payments in selected establishments. To exchange their G-Cash for cash, recipients must first enroll their mobile phone number in the G-Cash service by simply sending "REG<space><4-digit M-PIN of their choice>/<Mother's Maiden Name>/<First Name>/<Last Name>/<Address>/<Tel Number>" to 2882. After this one time registration, recipients may immediately go to any Globe Business Center, Tambunting Pawnshop, Lhuiller Pawnshop or at any other accredited G-Cash outlet nationwide to encash their G-Cash remittances. All G-Cash transactions are subject to a minimal cash-out fee at the accredited outlet or business center.

Innovative products like Quick Remit and Load are tailor-fit for the global Filipino community ensuring the seamless communication that OFWs and their families have come to rely on, especially during the holiday season. And they can be rest assured that Globe Kababayan will continue expanding the distribution of the Quick Remit and Load cards to more overseas destinations this coming year, bringing more and more Filipinos closer to home.

KAMAYAN UPHOLDS FILIPINO HAND WASHING TRADITION

At Kamayan Pasay Road, pampering guests constitute a large part of the old practices that continue to make the restaurant a permanent fixture in the Filipino dining experience. Batangas Rep. Hermilando Manadanas is given the Maharlika Wash, the traditional washing of the guests' hands in rose-petal scented water while a prayer of thanksgiving is uttered. The service is the Kamayan staff's way of showing respect and gratitude to their guests. Kamayan Restaurant has been providing customers the very best of Philippine cuisine and hospitality for more than two decades.

YOUNG NU SKIN EXECUTIVE

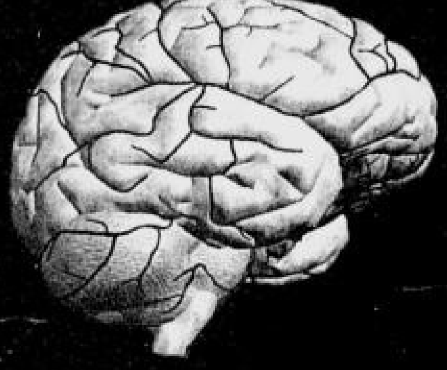
Twenty-six-year-old Rhea Horilleno, inspired by her cousin's achievements and thriving Nu Skin business, as well as her satisfaction from using Nu Skin products, decided to sign-up with the company as distributor in September 2000. After six months into the Nu Skin business, she was named Lapis executive. More success ensued as her number of downlines reached 8,000. Rhea shares her winning formula: take adversities as challenges, remain focused on your goals, and don't be complacent. For queries about Nu Skin Phils Inc, contact NSP at Distributor Hotline 689-0333 or log onto www.nuskin.com.ph.

REVENUE SHARING DEAL

BayanTrade president and COO Dante Briones hands over a check to Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines (Seipi) executive director Ernie Santiago, representing the revenue share from jointly facilitating the electronic procurement and bidding activities of its member companies. Seipi, the largest association of foreign and local semiconductor and electronics companies in the Philippines with over 200 members, earlier entered into a partnership with BayanTrade to operate an e-vertical portal that facilitates process efficiencies and cost savings from its sourcing and procurement activities. To date, BayanTrade has managed the sourcing and procurement requirements of various Seipi member companies amounting to more than P640 million for a wide range of commodities that includes cleanroom apparel, soldering, mold tools and packaging materials.

NOT YOUR USUAL CANTINA

Cantina is the place to be right now - the most delicious custom-made burritos, served fast, in a cool, hip and relaxed atmosphere - at prices you can afford. Cantina opened its first restaurant in June at Katipunan, Quezon City. It has since become a favorite of students and young professionals and at evenings and, on the weekends, singles and young married couples with their children join them. Cantina, a subsidiary of Tia Maria's, is targeted to open two more restaurants in 2005.



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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of SAK'S INTERIORS, INC. with address at Pagutlan, Tayud, Consolacion, Cebu for registration with the Board of Investments under Book I of the Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended, as Existing and Expanding Producer of Furniture, Furnishings and Accessories at a capacity of 7,500 Pieces/Year and with proposed plant site at (same as in above address) has been officially accepted on 04 January 2005, and is currently being processed.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent comments on the above-mentioned application may file his/her objection, in writing and under oath, with the BOI within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

Issued this **4th day of January 2005.**

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA
OIC-Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI – Jan. 6, 2005)

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AUCTION SALE

MARA PAWNSHOP BR of 2230 M. Roxes St. Sta Ana Manila Auction Sale on Jan. 12, 2005, Wed.at 2:30 in the afternoon. Respectively, Aug. 8 - Sept. 12, 2004 SONS of J. LANUZA, Auctioneer. (PDI - January 6, 2005)

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(PDI - January 6, 2005)

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late NORBERTO E. ABOBON has been extrajudicially settled with an affidavit of self adjudication by his heirs as per docs 89 & 90 ; page 18; book3 ; Series of 2004 before Notary Public Atty. Jocelyn A. Ratulta (PDI -December 23, 30 ' 2004 & January 6 2005)

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the plate No. TVL 894 registered under the name of ROSALINDA J. TINGCO was declared lost and could not be located as per affidavit dated Dec. 7, 2004 bearing Doc 458; Page 92; Book XIII; Series of 2004.
(PDI-Dec. 30,Jan 6&13,2005)

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INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
LAPU-LAPU CITY PHILIPPINES

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1 The Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority through its Bids and Award Committee (BAC) with office at Mactan, Lapulapu City, invites all interested suppliers/installers/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **Supply of labor, materials, equipments, expertise & tools for the maintenance/servicing for one (1) year to four (4) units Escalators and three (3) units Elevators** of Mactan-Cebu International Airport in the amount of P424,712.64

2. To be registered, interested bidders must submit the following eligibility documents (in case of photocopied documents, the original must be presented):
   a. DTI/SEC Registration Certificate
   b. Mayor's Permit, Municipal License
   c. BIR Certificate of Registration
   d. Notarized affidavit certifying under oath that each documents submitted is an original copy or a true faithful reproduction or copy of the original
   e. List of completed similar transactions for at least 5 years for both supplier/installer. List of On-going and to be awarded transactions. Submit Certification of Acceptance and Turnover
   f. Audited Financial Statement for the last 2 calendar years stamped by BIR or its duly accredited & authorized institution

3 Submission of Letter of Intent with Eligibility documents will be on January 7 to 11, 2005 Distribution of Bid Documents will be on January 17 to 19, 2005 at the BAC Office from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P250.00.

Pre-Bid Conference January 26, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. at BAC Office
Bid Opening February 3, 2005 at 10:00 a.m. at BAC Office
(Closing at 9:45 a.m.)

4. For more information, please contact the BAC Secretariat at telephone number 3402486 local 2050 or at 341-4617

5. Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. The procurement rules and regulations used in this transaction shall be in accordance with the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 9184.

6. The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids waive any defect of informality, assume no obligation whatsoever or indemnify to the bidders any expense of loss that it may incur in the preparation of its bid, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) VERONICA S. ORDOÑEZ
BAC Chairman

(PDI - Dec. 30, 2004 & Jan. 6, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that Mckinley Machinery Philippines, Inc. with principal address at F.P. Felix Avenue, Cainta, Rizal has changed its name to **Miyano Machinery Philippines, Inc.** effective January 1, 2005.

All transactions with Mckinley Machinery Philippines, Inc. shall be negotiated under the name of Miyano Machinery Philippines, Inc.

(PDI–Jan. 6, 2005)

President Arroyo instructs NFA to field more rolling stores

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has instructed the National Food Authority (NFA) to field more rolling stores to intensify accessibility and availability of low-priced basic food commodities at thickly populated urban centers and depressed areas in Metro Manila. During the recent rolling store kick-off held in Baseco Compound, Vice-President and head of the price watch team "Kabayan" Noli de Castro said that the President made the instruction to the food agency to ease fears of consumers on the increase in prices of basic food commodities particularly during the Christmas holidays. He added that the deployment of NFA rolling store will ensure that basic food commodities at lower prices are available for the identified poor communities in Metro Manila. At present NFA deploys 13 rolling stores in identified depressed and hotspot areas in Metro Manila. NFA rolling stores carry seven basic food commodities including NFA rice, sugar, milk, cooking oil, instant noodles, sardines and coffee. NFA administrator Gregorio Y. Tan Jr. stressed that NFA deploys rolling stores as part of the agency's mandate on ensuring accessibility and availability of cheaper food commodities to Filipino masses. NFA encourages the public to send in request, query complaint or comment on NFA rolling store operations through mobile number 0917-6210927.

NFA Union's Oplan Kalinga: Shelling out and reaching out

THE NATIONAL Food Authority Employees Association (NFAEA-Courage), the agency's duly registered employees union, will visit calamity-stricken areas and conduct a three-month relief operation dubbed as Oplan Kalinga for the benefit of victims of the recent typhoons in Luzon. Oplan Kalinga will cover six major provinces that registered the most number of victims and damages to livelihood. Relief goods will be distributed in Nueva Ecija and Aurora on Jan. 15, Isabela in February, Camarines Sur and Camarines Norte in March. Various relief goods such as rice, bottled water, canned goods, medicines, insect repellants, lighting materials, clothing, blankets and other essential items will be distributed to at least 150 families in every province mentioned who are temporarily situated in various evacuation centers and staging areas.

Rank and file employees shared from their meager income and pooled in various relief items for Oplan Kalinga. Other goods were purchased from cash donations from Filipino Americans in New Jersey, USA led by civic leader Phillip Caliolio and members of the Federation of Independent Legions of Pilipinos in the North Americas (FILIPINAS), NOVARTIS, OTC Drug Safety Department, FALDA, FAONJ, LKOD,

Lakeland Center and Friends Who Cares (FWC). The group will be assisted by the NFA Search and Rescue Team led by Jimmy Santos. NFAEA is still accepting donations in cash and in kind for the typhoon victims at its office located at the 11th floor, Matimyas bldg., E. Rodriguez Avenue, Quezon City

POWER SECTOR ASSETS & LIABILITIES MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("*PSALM*") Privatization, Bids and Award Committee ("*Committee*") invites interested parties to participate in and bid for the privatization of the following:

Plant Equipment, Components, Auxiliaries and Accessories of the Manila Thermal Power Plant located at Isla de Provisor, Paco, Manila

(the "*Asset*"). The Asset is being privatized on an "*as is where is*" basis.

Interested parties are required to submit a Letter of Interest ("*LOI*") to PSALM which shall state the full name, address, telephone and fax number of the interested party, name of the principal contact, and signed by an authorized representative. All LOIs must be received by PSALM at the PSALM Office, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, not later than 5:00 p.m. on January 14, 2005 (the "*LOI Submission Deadline*"). Only interested parties that submit an LOI by the LOI Submission Deadline shall be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

As a prerequisite to the receipt of the Bidding Package, interested parties shall execute a Confidentiality Agreement and an Undertaking pursuant to Section 78 of RA 9136, in the forms provided by PSALM, and pay a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Hundred U.S. Dollars (U.S. $ 500.00) (the "*Participation Fee*"). The Participation Fee shall either be in cash, manager's check or cashier's check. All bank charges, if any, shall be for the account of the interested party. The Confidentiality Agreement, Undertaking and Participation Fee must be received by PSALM on or before 5:00 p.m. of January 17, 2005 to entitle an interested party further participation in the privatization of the Asset.

The Bidding Package, which includes the bidding procedures, shall be issued during office hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from January 10 until January 18, 2005 at 5:00 p.m. (the "*Deadline*") at the PSALM Office. In accordance with the bidding procedures, only interested parties who have been issued the Bidding Package by the Deadline or a consortium which includes an interested party will be allowed to participate further in the privatization of the Asset.

The schedule of the bidding activities shall be as follows:

Due Diligence : January 10, 2005 to February 14, 2005
Pre-bid Conference : January 19, 2005, 9:30 a.m. at the PSALM Office
Deadline for Receipt of Bids by PSALM : February 18, 2005, 12:00 p.m. at the PSALM Office

References to dates and times shall be based on Manila time. Should any of the above dates fall on a holiday, the deadline shall be extended to the same time of the immediately succeeding business day in Makati City.

Interested parties will be required to post a bid security equivalent to ten percent (10%) of its total bid price in the form of an irrevocable letter of credit, confirmed by a local bank and acceptable to the Committee. The bid security of the winning bidder shall be substituted by a performance security to guarantee prompt, faithful and complete performance of its obligations under the transaction. A two-envelope bidding system will be adopted. Other details of the privatization of the Asset are contained in the Bidding Package.

Letters of Interest, Confidentiality Agreements and Undertakings shall be addressed and submitted to: The Chairman, Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee, PSALM Corporation, 2nd Floor, SGV II Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines. Inquiries and clarifications shall be addressed to Mr. Froilan A. Tampinco at the PSALM Office or at telephone number (632) 893-8202, fax number (632) 840-5341 or e-mail address fatampinco@psalm.gov.ph.

The Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any interested party or bidder or proposals or bids therefrom, or any part thereof, and/or to waive any defects contained therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government, without offering any reason whatsoever. It does not assume any obligation to compensate or indemnify parties for any expense or loss that they may incur as a result of their participation in the privatization process, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made. Finally, it reserves the right to modify, supplement, or change the Bidding Procedures and other aspects of the privatization process at any time, including the schedule and the venue provided herein, for any reason whatsoever and without giving prior notice. Interested parties and/or bidders will be notified subsequently of such modifications, supplements, or changes.

(Sgd.) **VINCENT S. PEREZ, JR.**
Chairman
PSALM Privatization, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Jan. 5, 6 & 7, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor and Employment
OWWA Center, 7th St. corner
F.B. Harrison St., Pasay City
P.O. Box 1617 Manila, Philippines
Zip Code - 1300
Telex: 27794 OWWA - PH
Tels.: 891-7601 to 24
Fax: 833-0187

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration

ATTENTION: ALL OWWA EDSP EXAMINEES

THE QUALIFYING EXAMINATION FOR EDUCATION FOR DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (EDSP) FOR DEPENDENTS OF OWWA MEMBERS HAS BEEN MOVED FROM 05 DECEMBER 2004 TO 09 JANUARY 2005, AT THE SAME DOST TESTING CENTERS OR VENUES EARLIER ASSIGNED TO EXAMINEES. EXAMINATIONS SHALL BE HELD IN THE MORNING AND AFTERNOON AS PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED. FOR MORE DETAILS, PLEASE CONTACT OWWA REGIONAL OFFICES OR OWWA 24/7 OPERATIONS CENTER AT TELEPHONE NUMBERS 551-6641 AND 551-1560 OR OWWA MAIN OFFICE AT TELEPHONE NUMBER 832-1268.

(PDI - Jan. 6, 2005)

DRAFT SHORTENED VERSION OF DIVORCE SUMMONS

IN THE HIGH COURT OF SOUTH AFRICA
TRANSVAAL PROVINCIAL DIVISION

HELD AT PRETORIA CASE NO. 30627/04
In the matter between
ALAIN GERARD PECK
(Identity Number 540329 5186 107) PLAINTIFF
AND
ELENA L. OCSONA
(Born 1st October 1986) DEFENDANT

To: ELENA L. OCSONA, an adult female unemployed person with last known address at: L3 B1 Carolina Street, Greenland, Newtown Ampid, in the town of San Mateo, Republic of the Philippines;

YOU ARE HEREBY INFORMED that: ALAIN GERARD PECK, an adult male businessman residing at 70 Milkwood Street, Sable, Mpumalanga, Republic of South Africa (hereinafter called the Plaintiff); to whom you were married in the community of property on the 2nd May 2003 in the town of Camiling, Province of Tarlac, Philippines

HEREBY institute a divorce action against you, due to the disintegration of your marital relationship the full details of which is set out in the Summons filed with the Registrar or the Plaintiff's Attorney, in which action he claims such as relief as set on hereunder:

YOU ARE FURTHER HEREBY INFORMED that should you wish to dispute the action of the Plaintiff you are to serve a notice of intention to defend the matter within 30 days from the publication of this notice on the undermentioned Attorneys for the Plaintiff and to file same with the Registrar of the High Court, Corner of Vermeulen and Paul kruger Streets, Pretoria, Province of Gauteng, Republic of South Africa. Within 20 days of service and filing of such notice you are to file with the Registrar and serve upon the Plaintiff a Plea, Exception, Notice to strike out, with or without a counterclaim. Should you fail to file and serve notice as foresaid judgment may be given against you without further notice as below:

1. A decree of divorce;
2. Forfeiture by the Defendant of any benefits of the joint estate;
3. Cost of suit only in the event of the matter being defended;
4. Further and/or alternative relief

DATED at PRETORIA on this 17 day of NOVEMBER, 2004.

Registrar of the High Court
Private Bag x 67
Pretoria 0001
Gauten, Republic of South Africa

EY STUART INC.
Second Floor, Edward Chamber
336 Paul Kruger Street, Pretoria 0001
Gauten, Republic of South Africa
Tel. 27/12/ 3222401

(PDI – January 6, 2005)

Rush Sale - Office Condo Unit

Cityland Condominium 10 Tower 1
Unit 2414, 20th Floor
6815 Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Floor Area = 65.56 square meters
Please call or text Ms. Jojo Punsal
0917-8332722

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

INVITATION TO BID

The asset being offered through public bidding, on an "as-is, where-is" basis, is a parcel of land with an area of 182.30 sq.m., more or less, located at Barangay Obrero, Tondo, Manila, formerly belonging to Delta Motors Corporation.

Indicative Price
P800,000

Bids will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of the bidders on January 20, 2005 at 3:00 P.M. at the PMO Conference Room, 6th Floor, PMO Bldg., 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Interested parties may request for a duly authenticated copy of the Asset Specific Bidding Rules (ASBR), Asset Specific Bidding Form (ASBF) together with the Asset Specific Catalogue for a nominal fee of P300.00.

For more information, please call Ms. Melinda B. Cortez of the PMO Marketing Department at telephone numbers 892-2145 or 818-4733.

(PDI--Jan. 6, 7 & 8, 2005)

PNOC PETROCHEMICAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
PNOC Building VI, Energy Center
Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, M.M.
Tel. No.: 812-6209 / 840-1440

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL COMPANY (PNOC) invites interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and bid for the following requirement:

Project No.	:	WFM 05 – 003
Project Title	:	Supply of Labor and Equipment for Various Park Support Services (Custodial Services)
Pre-Bid Meeting	:	January 13, 2005 (2:00 PM)
Eligibility Deadline	:	January 17, 2005 (3:00 PM)
Bid Deadline	:	January 27, 2005 (2:00 PM)
Approved Budget	:	P3,300,000.00

Eligibility forms shall be available for issuance upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00 while bidding documents shall be available for issuance to eligible bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P100.00 at the PNOC-Property and Supply Management Division (PSMD) at the G/F of the PNOC Building from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

All bids exceeding P1,000,000.00 must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check equivalent to 1% of the Approved Budget of the Contract (ABC) or 2.5% of the ABC in the form of a Surety Bond secured from any one of PNOC's accredited bonding companies.

The PNOC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive formality therein or to accept such bids or to award any work that are considered most advantageous to the company.

(Sgd.) **Atty. Pedro A. Aquino, Jr.**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI--Jan. 6 & 7, 2005)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Diliman, Quezon City

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE SALE SCRAP/JUNK ITEMS

"AS IS, WHERE IS" BASIS

DATE OF BIDDING : January 25, 2005, 2:00 PM, Solarium Multi-Purpose Rooms, Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC-HO, Agham Road corner Quezon Ave., Diliman, Quezon City

The National Power Corporation will conduct public bidding of the following scrap and junk items located at various NPC stations.

SCHEDULE 1 (Simultaneous public bidding at Zamboanga SPUG and NPC-HO, Diliman, Q.C.)

Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1. One (1) lot of junk diesel engine parts, scrap metals and corroded drums located at Isabela, Basilan.	P 75,000.00/lot

SCHEDULE 2

Item Description and Location	Minimum Bid Price
1. One (1) lot of junk diesel engine parts, scrap metals and corroded drums located at Marinawa DPP, Bato, Catanduanes	P 126,000.00/lot
2. One (1) lot junk and scrap communication equipment cables, control panels, used batteries, office equipment and computers, One (1) unit motor vehicle, located at Systems Operations Warehouse, Hermosa, Bataan Note: Batteries are located at Systems Ops., Diliman, Q.C.	P 443,000.00/lot
3. One (1) lot junk/scrap items consisting of substation equipment, power cables, guy wires, office equipment and computers, GPEs, three (3) units junk motor vehicles, and other junk items in the cordoned off area at Mexico Substation, Mexico, Pampanga	P 773,250.00/lot
4. One (1) lot "PCB-Free" used transformer oil and Oil Circuit Breakers, twelve (12) sets located at Mexico Substation, Mexico, Pampanga. DENR permit to transport is required for this item. Note. Two (2) poles of the oil circuit breakers with PCB contamination is not included in the sale	P 4,028,430.00/lot

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. PROPOSAL BOND DEPOSIT IN THE FORM OF CASH OR MANAGERS'S/CASHIER'S CHECK EQUIVALENT TO TEN PERCENT (10%) OF THE TOTAL BID PRICE
2. LATEST INCOME TAX RETURN (2003 ORIGINAL OR XEROX COPY OF THE BIDDER OR AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (ORIGINAL) OF THE COMPANY AND ONE (1) COPY OF VALID IDENTIFICATION CARD LIKE DRIVER'S LICENSE, GSIS, ID, SSS ID, POSTAL ID, PASSPORT, PRC ID AND COMPANY ID.

Interested parties who wish to participate in the public bidding may secure the bid form at P500.00/set from S.V. Lomuntad, Jr. at Bldg. 1, Ground Floor, NPC Head Office, Corner Agham Road and Quezon Ave., Diliman, Q.C. or call telephone no. 924-5384. Deadline for issuance of bid form is 4:30 PM January 24, 2005.

For the Materials Management Department
(Sgd.) **FELIX B. TACATA JR.**
OIC, MMD

(PDI--Jan. 5, 6 & 7, 2005)

WHERE YOU FIND THE BEST. Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer and visit it online at www.jobmarketonline.com

OBITUARIES

"Our true home is in Heaven and Jesus Christ whose return we long for will come to save us." Php 3:20

In loving memory
1st Death and Birth Anniversaries

Atty. SIDRITO "Sid" V. Ramiro

January 6, 1937 – January 6, 2004

He is remembered in all masses today, January 6, 2005 at The Holy Family Parish Church, Pasig City and Holy Spirit Parish Church, BF Homes, Quezon City at 6:00 a.m.

His remains were laid to rest on January 11, 2005 at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

Message of Thanks

The family of the late

CONCEPCION D. DADUFALZA

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on 26 December 2004

would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude to all who condoled with them in their time of sorrow.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
John 14:6

MESSAGE OF THANKS

FROM

REPERTORY PHILIPPINES
BABY, CHARLIE, ETIENNE

AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY OF

ZENEIDA ANGARA "BIBOT" AMADOR

FEBRUARY 7, 1933 - NOVEMBER 28, 2004

Thank you for your prayers and comforting presence during
her last hours, her wake, and her funeral; for the tributes
you paid her in song and in words; for the generous donations
you gave to support her work; for the beautiful flowers
that made such a lovely set for her final appearance;
and for the time and talent you gave with love
that made her send-off one which would
have made her happy and proud.

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OBITUARIES

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12:00 noon
Day before publication

BANGKO LUZON, INC.

(Formerly Community Rural Bank of San Isidro (N.E.), Inc.)
Poblacion, San Isidro, Nueva Ecija

The Board of Directors, Officers and Staff of

BANGKO LUZON, INC.

Extend its deepest sympathy and condolences
to the bereaved family of

PAULINO B. DIONISIO, SR.

Former Chairman of the Board

Who peacefully joined his Creator on January 3, 2005.

His remains lie in state at the Pura Building,
No. 55 Scout Santiago corner Scout Rallos Sts.,
Quezon City.

Jeffrey Wernher Lim Gonzales

of Las Piñas City and General Santos City

passed away and joined his mother Noreen (†)
in the Grace of our Lord at the age of 22.

His loving father **Rene**; his brother and sister-in-law, **Creighton** and **Sandy**; his sister **Vanessa Irene**; the **Gonzales Family**; the **Lim Family**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul and rejoice with us at his return to our Creator.

His remains lie in state at the St. Jerome Emiliani Parish Memorial Chapel, Ayala Alabang.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 8, 2005 at 9:30 a.m. at Everest Hills Memorial Park, Susana Heights, Muntinlupa City.

DEAN PASCASIO S. BANARIA

(Former Director of United Doctors Medical Center, Inc.)

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on January 4, 2005 at the age of 90.

With a deep sense of loss,

The Board of Directors,
Medical Staff and Employees of

UNITED DOCTORS MEDICAL CENTER

condole with his entire family and request the
pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the National Memorial Homes,
Chapel 2-A, No. 264 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for My sake will find it." **Matthew 10:39**

Our beloved mother

Jacinta A. Trinidad

of Vergara, Mandaluyong
and widow of Former Councilor Macario Trinidad

Passed away in the morning of January 2, 2005
in Los Angeles, California at the age of 84.

She will be cremated in California on Saturday. Her ashes will be flown back home and kept with the remains of our father in the Philippines.

We, her children **Felisa** (†), **Estelita**, **Fernando**, **Rogelio**, **Ricardo**, **Jaime**, **Danilo** and **Victoria**, request for prayers and kind deeds, mainly for the poor and the sick, in her memory.

Our deepest gratitude to all those who have sympathized with us.

The Board of Directors, Officers and Staff of
CORDILLERA SAVINGS BANK, INC.

Condole with the family of

ATTY. ROSENDO SABANGAN DULAY

Chairman of the Board

Who peacefully joined our Creator on December 30, 2004 at the age of 78.

He is survived by his loving wife, **Cresencia Serquiña**,
children **Sally & Tony**, **Dong & Visa**, **Pides & Liza**, **Gerry & Jenny**,
Olive & Percival, **Marvin & Liway**,
Foster children **Eding**, **Rogel & Dolly**, **Josue & Seding**,
their grandchildren & great grandchildren.

His remains lie in state at the Dulay residence, Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya.

Interment will be on Saturday, January 08, 2005 at Dulay Private Cemetery
after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

"We know that God raised the Lord Jesus from death. He will raise us to life with Jesus. He will present us, along with you, to God." **2 Corinthians 4:14**

Virgilio Verzosa Verzo

peacefully joined his Creator
on January 5, 2005 at the age of 70.

His wife **Ditas**; children **Jon**, **Joey**, **Annette**, **Mark** and **Nikki**; in-laws **Cristy**, **Bambi** and **Gar**; granchildren **Yso** and **Tana**; other relatives and friends request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. Jerome Parish Church, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Interment will be announced later.

"Do not let your hearts
be troubled. Trust in God,
trust also in Me.
In My Father's house
are many rooms...
I am going there to prepare
a place for you."
John 14:1-2

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

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sms feedback: inquirer life name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart)
or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

OKS ◎ TUESDAY FITNESS ◎ WEDNESDAY 2BU ◎ THURSDAY FOOD ◎ FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

SINFULLY Delicious Royce Nama Chocolates

ROYCE Chocolate Beans

The Japanese have come up with something that best fits the description 'melt in your mouth'

The best chocolate isn't European

THE FIRST issue for 2005! Back to reality and a pile of questions. Let's get to work.

I am a chocoholic in search of the best chocolate. Are you a sweets person? Any suggestions?

MAIDA

Lately, I've been a Royce Chocolate freak. Royce, a company based in Sapporo, makes all sorts of chocolate-based products—from chocolates, cookies, mini cakes, coffee and even chocolate-based skin care products. Yes, it's a Japanese company! And I have a friend to thank for introducing me to it.

My favorite is what is called "Nama Chocolate," or fresh chocolate that comes in 11 variants—Champagne, White, Caramel, etc. The chocolates are smooth, rich and best fit the description "melt in your mouth."

Fresh cream is a main ingredient so these chocolates come with a cooling gel pack to ensure that the required temperature is maintained and the chocolates remain intact from the shop to your home.

Unfortunately, they're not yet available in Manila. Outside Japan, only Hong Kong and Singapore have them. The chocolates are flown in daily from Japan. The last I heard, supply was unable to meet demand.

So if you're bound for HK or Singapore, looking for these elusive treats should be in your agenda. In HK, City Super outlets carry the line and in Singapore, Takashimaya and Suntec City Mall, Tower 5 have them. Another thing to try: Royce Beans Chocolate.

Yes, Maida, I am a sweets person... Very, very sweet!

No pride in her fried

Paano pong magprito ng isda? Palagi ko kasing'sinusubukan pero hindi malutong.

JANE OF COTABATO

Miss Jane of Cotabato, Miss Reggie of La Union says it's quite simple! Follow these rules and you'll be making chicharon-crisp fish in no time!

- Fry in a lot of oil. I say deep-fry.
- Make sure the oil is smoking before you put the fish.
- Score fish. This is done by making shallow cuts in a diamond pattern on the surface of fish.
- Season fish with salt and pepper.
- Deep-fry both sides, 7-8 minutes each side for a fish that weighs a kilo. Add or subtract two minutes each side for every half kilo more or less of fish. Make sure you watch the fish closely as cooking time may vary, though slightly, depending on the cooking vessel used and the intensity of heat. I don't recommend doing this on aluminum pans.
- Drain fish on paper towels.

Tip: If you love fried fish but not the smell, squeeze lemon juice on the fish, then let it sit for 20 minutes before frying.

Adobo recipe

Please teach me how to make ordinary food, *mga lutong bahay* especially *adobo*.

MRS. TIRONA

Surprisingly, each week a request for *adobo* pops up. So here it is, my mom's *adobo*, which to me is the most *masarap*! But then again, as far as I'm concerned, my mother is the best cook there is! (Mom, I hope you're reading this!)

Her recipe is from my *lola* and uses no more than four main ingredients. No soy sauce here so it's nice, light and delicious. The thing I like best about it is that the cooking method brings out the flavors of the ingredients and are not overwhelmed by the taste and color of soy sauce.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Ingredients:

1 kilo pork *liempo*, cubed or 1/2 kilo pork *liempo* & 1/2 kilo chicken, *adobo* cut (we do ours 1" x 1", even-sized cuts make a difference so make them as uniform in size as possible)

1 head of Ilokos garlic, peeled and slightly pounded

3-4 tbsp vinegar (Datung Puti is okay)

1 tsp whole peppercorns

1 bay leaf (though mom did not use it before because dad disliked bay leaf)

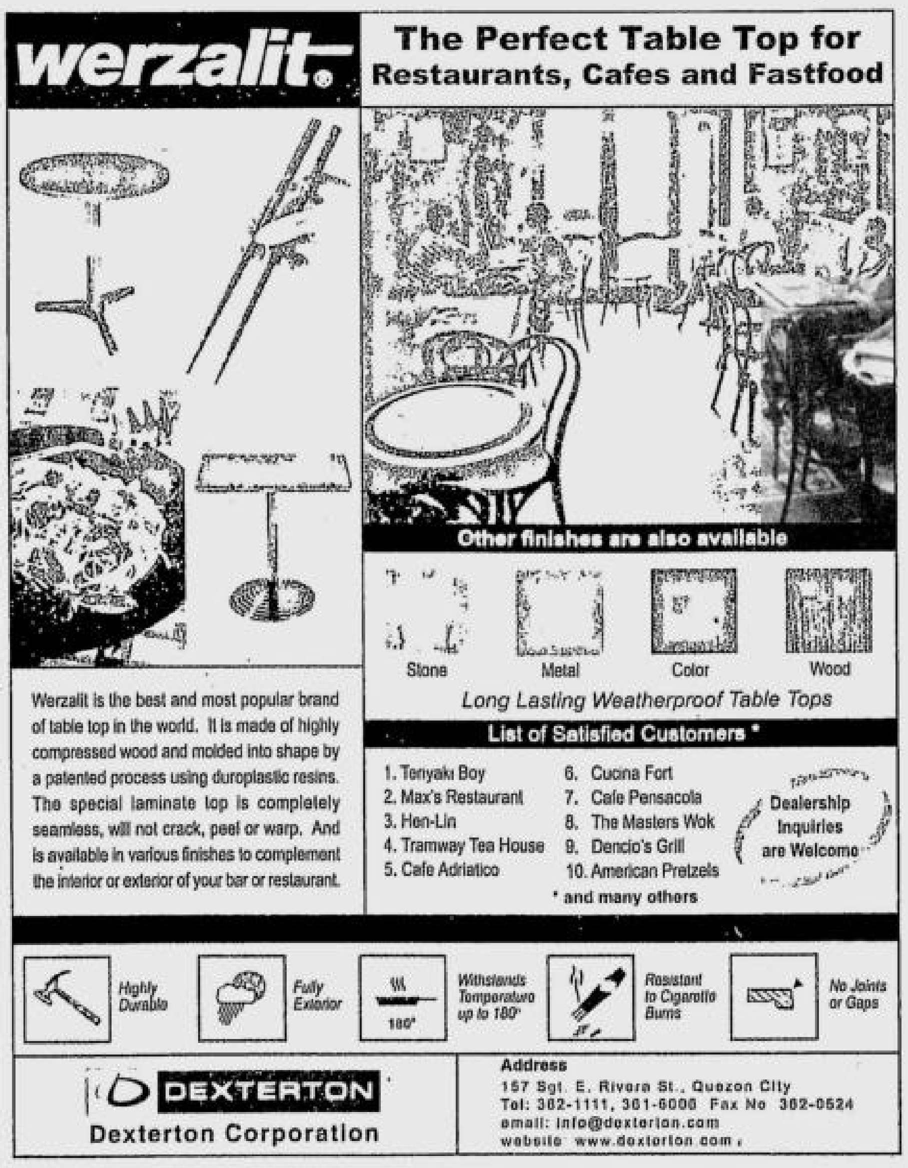
water

Salt to taste (I like seasoning with *patis* though)

- Heat up a heavy saucepan.
- When pan is hot: Rinse pork and chicken in water and from the faucet, drop pork pieces into the pan. Remember, the slightly watered pork pieces make a difference as water helps extract more fat which is vital for flavor.
- Cook until pork turns to light golden brown. During this process, oil will be extracted from pork while browning.
- Add garlic, peppercorns and bay leaf. Saute a few minutes.
- Add vinegar and scrape the bottom of the pan. Scraping the bits stuck to the bottom is what makes it flavorful. You will notice that you will have a mixture that looks like brown gravy. This is what you want.
- Add water just enough to cover/submerge the meat. Another important step. Too much water will dilute the flavor.
- Bring mixture to a boil and simmer over lowest possible heat until pork is soft. If liquid evaporates before the meat is soft, add more water, again, just enough to cover the pork and continue cooking until soft.
- Season to taste with salt and/or fish sauce. And if you were to go by my *lola*'s recipe, she would add a bit of MSG.

I start teaching again on the 10th of January, call us for our schedules. My weekly schedule also appears in this section.

For questions and comments, text 0917-8399888.



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Pasay Rd cellphone 09178515920
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SM NORTH Mitch 929-5429
SUBIC Beth 252-6514
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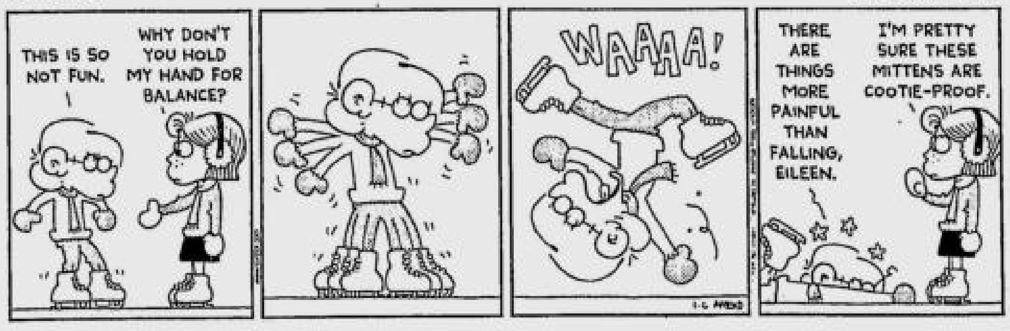
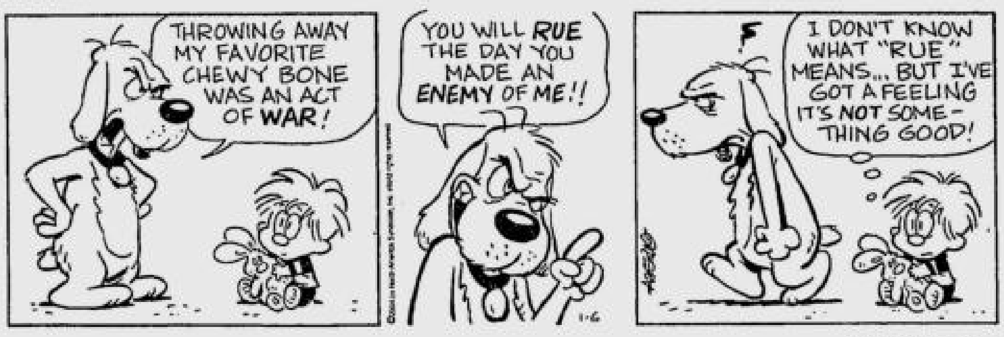
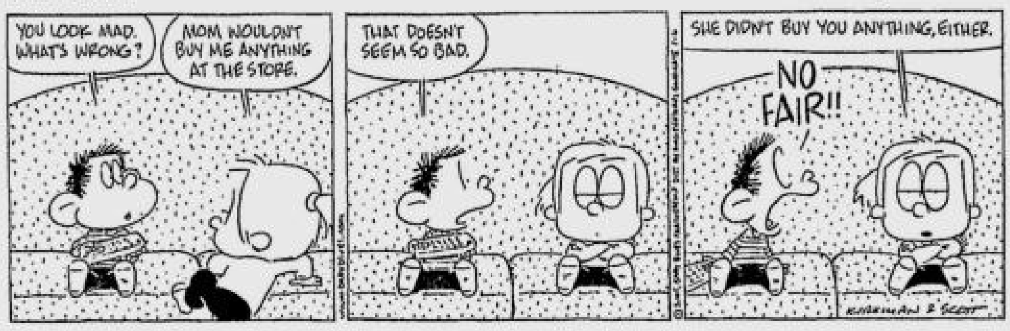
FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND


THIS IS SO NOT FUN.
WHY DON'T YOU HOLD MY HAND FOR BALANCE?
WAAAA!
THERE ARE THINGS MORE PAINFUL THAN FALLING, EILEEN.
I'M PRETTY SURE THESE MITTENS ARE COOTIE-PROOF.

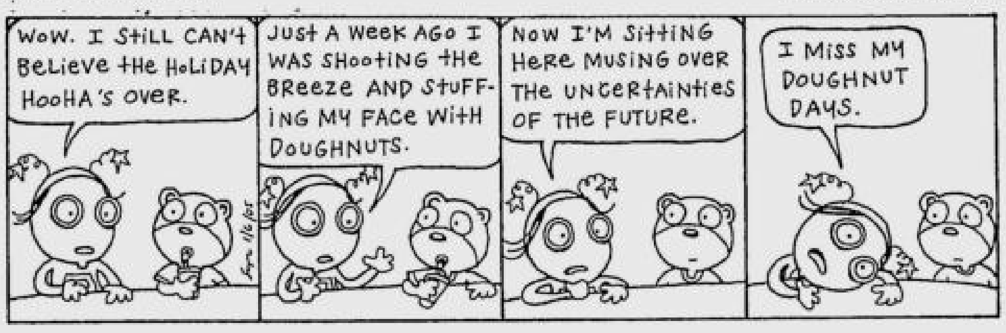
MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THROWING AWAY MY FAVORITE CHEWY BONE WAS AN ACT OF WAR!
YOU WILL RUE THE DAY YOU MADE AN ENEMY OF ME!!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT "RUE" MEANS... BUT I'VE GOT A FEELING IT'S NOT SOME-THING GOOD!

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT


YOU LOOK MAD. WHAT'S WRONG?
MOM WOULDN'T BUY ME ANYTHING AT THE STORE.
THAT DOESN'T SEEM SO BAD.
SHE DIDN'T BUY YOU ANYTHING, EITHER.
NO FAIR!!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WoW. I StiLL CAN't BeLieve the HoLiDAY HooHA's oveR.
Just A week Ago I WAS Shooting the Breeze AND Stuff-ing My FAce With DoughNuts.
Now I'M Sitting Here MusiNG over The UNcertAinties of the Future.
I Miss My Doughnut Days.

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are a loyal and faithful friend. You are broad-minded and tolerant, and you have a scholarly mind. You're fascinated by the human condition. In fact, you want to know what makes people and the world in general tick. Expect major changes in the year ahead, perhaps as significant as those around 1996. **Birthdate of:** Rowan Atkinson, comic actor; Tom Mix, movie cowboy; Carl Sandburg, poet.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're in the spotlight now for whatever reason. People notice you. But more than that, they're impressed with you (even if you don't do anything special)!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Make plans to travel or go back to school. The bottom line right now is you want to expand your horizons in some way. You want adventure. You want to learn something new!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel very intense lately. And your passions are also running high. However, on the practical side, attend to bills, debt and shared property now.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): With the Sun opposite your sign now, you have an opportunity to learn more about your relationships with others. You can also learn more about yourself.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Put out as much energy as you can to get better organized at home and at work. You need to do this; other things depend upon it. It's a good opportunity to streamline and downsize!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You feel playful, saucy and flirtatious. You want to have fun—and why not? Express your creative talents in any way that you can. You don't have to pretend to be what you are not.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Without question, your focus is on home and family now. Discussions with parents and family members are important. Work to create a warm, cozy atmosphere that makes you feel comfortable and safe.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Shopping, buying and selling, increased reading and writing, short trips, appointments and meetings keep you on the run now! Enjoy conversations with siblings.

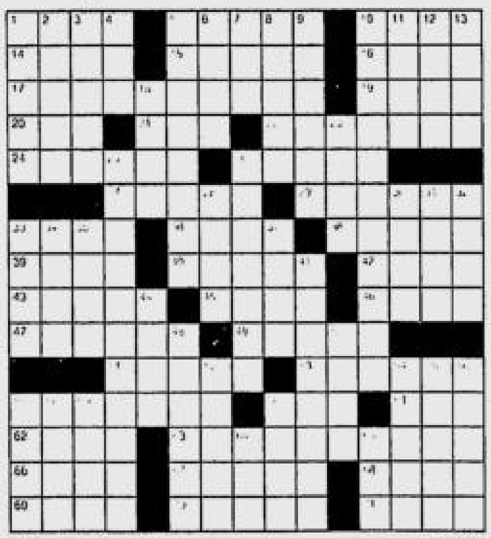
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might be spending more money than usual now. You want your possessions to show who you are and support a lifestyle you desire. (You want to travel and be outdoors.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): People and opportunities are inexplicably drawn to you now. That's because the Sun is in your sign. It attracts energy your way. (Make the most of this advantage while you can.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Although you're schmoozing and socializing a lot, you also need more solitude to pull your act together. Try to work alone if you can.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Friendships are important to you now. You welcome the company and emotional support that you get from others.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA
1/6/05

ACROSS
1 Mary's little pet
5 Perfect
10 Hemingway's sobriquet
14 Nobelist Wiesel
15 Infamous Helmsley
16 Mr. Trebek
17 Group embarkation points
19 Fixed charge
20 Qty.
21 Part of E.U.
22 Southpaws
24 Defeats
26 Saxophonist Mulligan
27 Pilot program
29 Excellent
33 __ California
36 Skip
38 Pyle of Mayberry
39 Palme of Sweden
40 Wanderer
42 Potent beginning?
43 Staff signs
45 Goad
46 Hors d'oeuvres item
47 Knocked out
49 Martin or Allen
51 Mozart's "The Magic __"
53 Pancho's poncho
57 Bee contestant
60 Opp. of NNW
61 More in Mexico
62 Ms. Garr
63 Group slobs
66 You wish!
67 Early anesthetic
68 Riding the waves
69 Removed
70 Considers
71 Actress Lamarr

DOWN
1 Aboveboard
2 Shrine to remember
3 Coins
4 Panhandle
5 Trick of the eye
6 Sweetie
7 Long period
8 Leg joint
9 Cutting rays
10 Group wet blanket
11 Jai follower?
12 Sneaky guy?
13 Lumber camp tools
18 Equal
23 Dance of the '60s
25 Group bread
26 Quick peek
28 Israeli novelist Oz
30 Poet Lazarus
31 Tenant's check
32 Semisoft cheese
33 Strong, dark beer
34 __ breve
35 Young kangaroo
37 Like a drumhead
41 Bureaus
44 Trade for money
48 Did a Burr-Hamilton
50 Swerve
52 Overused
54 Give the giggles to
55 Beeped
56 English class assignment
57 Without a date
58 Cancun cash
59 Moran or Gray
60 Junior branch?
64 Pooh's middle name?
65 Phooey!

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

Q	U	I	D	■	S	W	I	S	S	■	S	A	C	K
O	N	C	E	■	K	A	P	P	A	■	E	L	H	I
M	A	E	S	■	E	S	S	E	N	■	A	L	A	N
■	■	H	I	T	T	H	E	C	E	I	L	I	N	G
S	R	O	■	E	C	O	■	■	■	D	E	N	T	S
P	A	C	E	T	H	E	F	L	O	O	R	■	■	■
L	I	K	E	S	■	■	L	E	N	S	■	D	U	C
I	S	E	E	■	A	M	U	S	E	■	E	A	R	L
T	A	V	■	I	M	A	M	■	■	M	E	R	O	E
■	■	■	R	A	I	S	E	T	H	E	R	O	O	F
S	A	L	E	M	■	■	■	O	E	R	■	U	P	S
C	L	I	M	B	T	H	E	W	A	L	L	S	■	■
R	E	M	O	■	H	O	V	E	R	■	R	E	I	S
U	N	I	T	■	A	L	E	R	T	■	G	R	I	P
M	E	T	E	■	W	E	L	S	H	■	A	S	E	A

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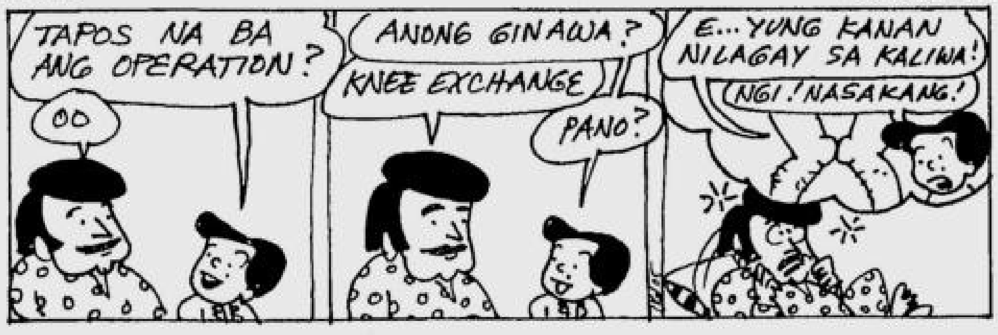
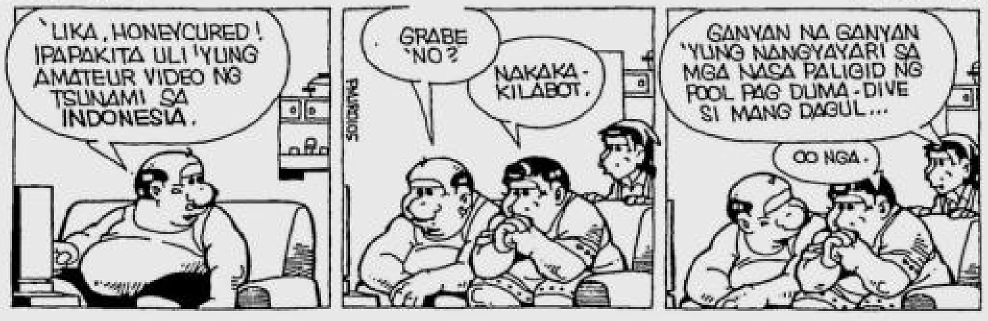
1/5/05

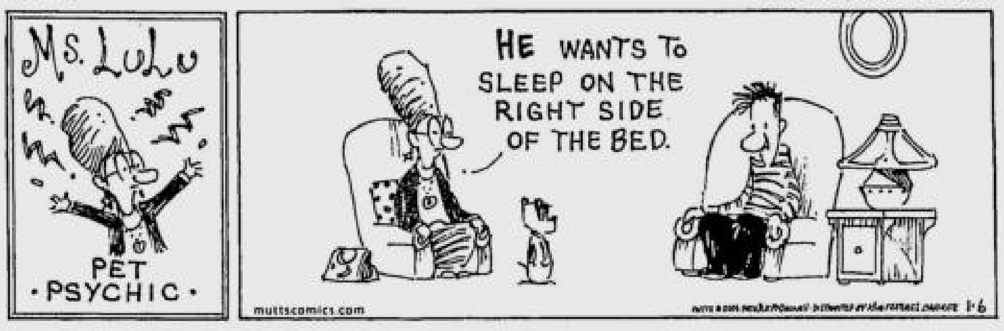
A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA


TAPOS NA BA ANG OPERATION?
OO
ANONG GINAWA?
KNEE EXCHANGE
PANO?
E... YUNG KANAN NILAGAY SA KALIWA!
NGI! NASAKANG!

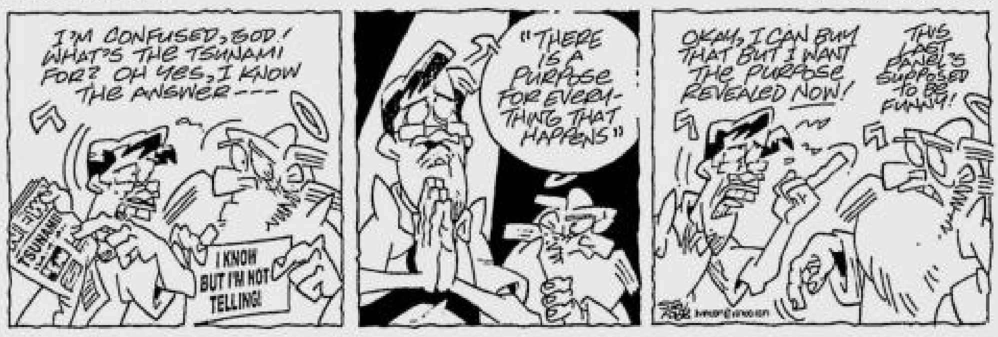
PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR


'LIKA, HONEYCURED! IPAPAKITA ULI 'YUNG AMATEUR VIDEO NG TSUNAMI SA INDONESIA.
GRABE 'NO?
NAKAKA-KILABOT.
GANYAN NA GANYAN 'YUNG NANGYAYARI SA MGA NASA PALIGID NG POOL PAG DUMA-DIVE SI MANG DAGUL...
OO NGA.

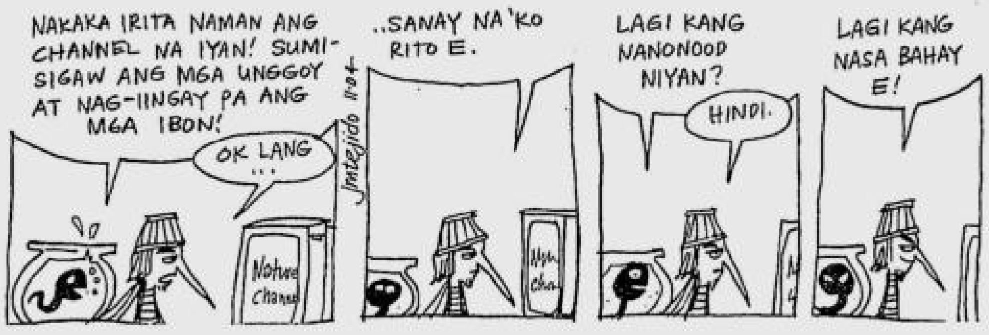
MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL


Ms. LuLu
PET PSYCHIC
HE WANTS TO SLEEP ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BED.
muttscomics.com
1-6

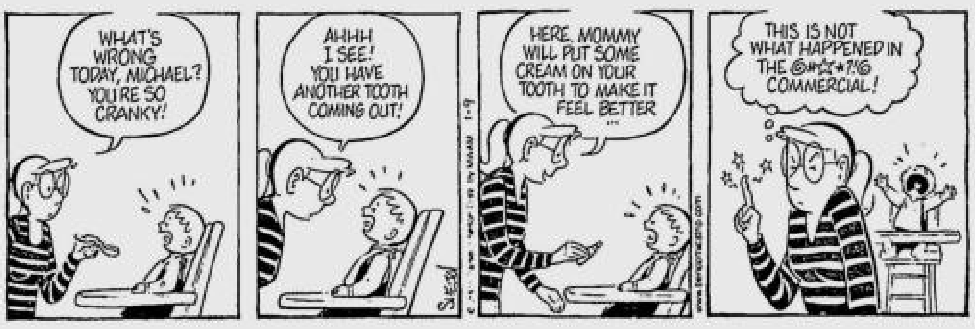
DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


I'M CONFUSED, GOD! WHAT'S THE TSUNAMI FOR? OH YES, I KNOW THE ANSWER---
TSUNAMI
I KNOW BUT I'M NOT TELLING!
"THERE IS A PURPOSE FOR EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENS"
OKAY, I CAN BUY THAT BUT I WANT THE PURPOSE REVEALED NOW!
THIS LAST PANEL'S SUPPOSED TO BE FUNNY!

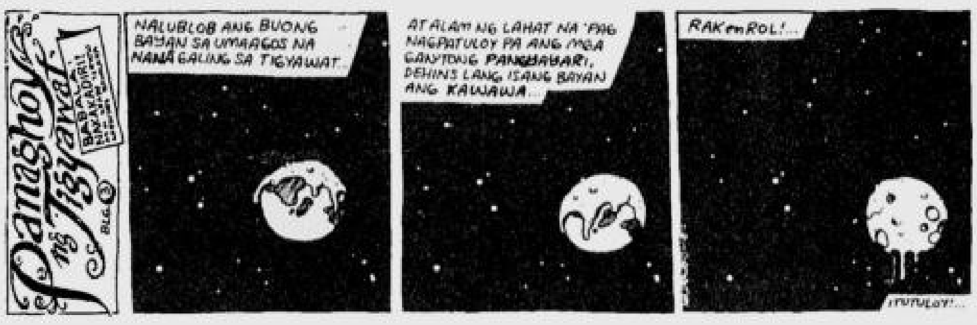
MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


NAKAKA IRITA NAMAN ANG CHANNEL NA IYAN! SUMI-SIGAW ANG MGA UNGGOY AT NAG-IINGAY PA ANG MGA IBON!
OK LANG...
Nature Channel
..SANAY NA'KO RITO E.
LAGI KANG NANONOOD NIYAN?
HINDI.
LAGI KANG NASA BAHAY E!

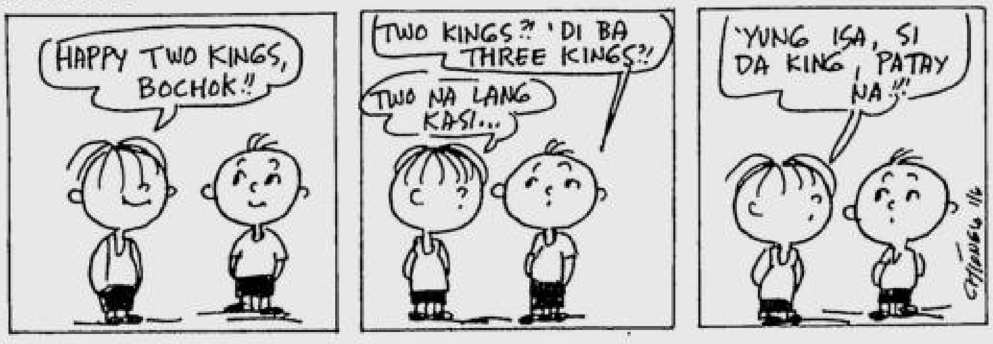
BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON


WHAT'S WRONG TODAY, MICHAEL? YOU'RE SO CRANKY!
AHHH I SEE! YOU HAVE ANOTHER TOOTH COMING OUT!
HERE. MOMMY WILL PUT SOME CREAM ON YOUR TOOTH TO MAKE IT FEEL BETTER...
THIS IS NOT WHAT HAPPENED IN THE @#☆*?!© COMMERCIAL!

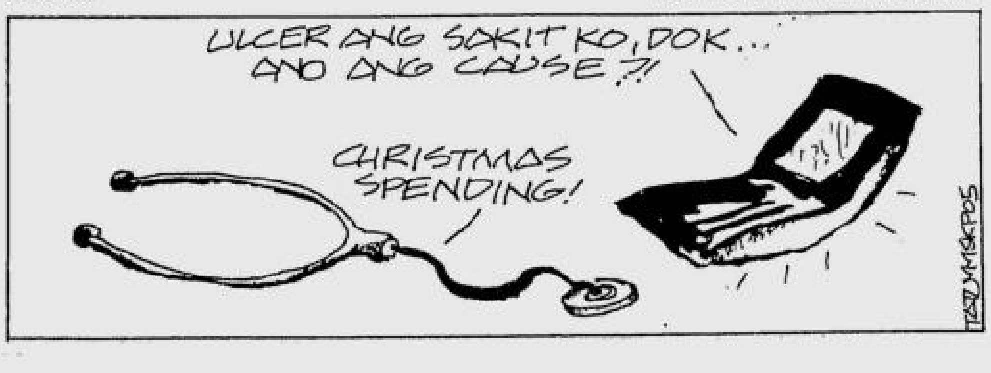
KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA


Pangawaey ng Tigyawat
NALUBLOB ANG BUONG BAYAN SA UMAAGOS NA NANA GALING SA TIGYAWAT...
AT ALAM NG LAHAT NA 'PAG NAGPATULOY PA ANG MGA GANITONG PANGYAYARI, DEHINS LANG ISANG BAYAN ANG KAWAWA...
RAK en ROL!...
ITUTULOY!...

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HAPPY TWO KINGS, BOCHOK!!
TWO KINGS?! 'DI BA THREE KINGS?!
TWO NA LANG KASI...
'YUNG ISA, SI DA KING, PATAY NA!!

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ULCER ANG SAKIT KO, DOK... ANO ANG CAUSE?!
CHRISTMAS SPENDING!

Downed by a virus attack

THE CONSUMER
Marietta Velasco Giron

AS OUR readers may have noticed, this column failed to appear last week. The truth of the matter is, I have not been able to write my stories for over a week now because of a computer virus, the worst I've been warned about but didn't have the good sense to prevent.

The technician who set up my computer did tell me about the anti-virus and other protective software installed, and explained how to use them. I was also told about the firewall program that was supposedly keeping watch over my computer at all times.

The trouble was I delayed activating all these protective programs.

I learned about the phenomenal growth of computer virus two years ago from a consumer magazine. It apprised readers of the virulence of notorious viruses Melissa, Love Letters, Trojan Horse, and many more. The publication also pointed out that hackers or virus perpetrators were so sophisticated and cunning they were able to trick users into allowing the virus to enter their computers where it would wreak havoc on the system.

In a recent report, the consumer magazine warned anew that virus activity had shown no sign of abating. In fact, it had worsened. Protecting one's computer from these hazards was no longer an option, but a necessity, the magazine stressed.

It's too late now for me. The virus that hacked my computer was so virulent that it destroyed files after files, and all the stored documents, including e-mail folders with yet-to-be-resolved consumer complaints.

It was indeed a devastating experience, on a yearend at that. Nonetheless, the experience made me a tad wiser. Henceforth, I shall follow all anti-virus precautions as I start a new year with my reformatted, reconfigured, and fully armed computer.

I share with our readers the following advise from IT (information technology) expert Vic Hilario of a leading consumer product company:

What you need to know

- Do not panic when you lose a file or program. It is not necessarily a case of virus attack, but is most probably the result of normal wear and tear on the hard disk.
- Missing files may be recovered by running an anti-virus scanner. Normally, the software will disinfect files and quarantine the belligerent ones.
- The number of viruses is constantly increasing. It is said there is a new virus every minute.
- Virus can attach itself to a diskette or software, so don't, as a general rule, lend or share your copy.
- Commercial software is protected by copyright, and is not supposed to be shared or given away unless the copyright holder allows free exchange.
- Virus perpetrators use tricks and disguises to seek entry to a computer system. Examples of tricks are e-mail warning about a new virus. The message is accompanied by instruction to forward the warning to others.
- Hackers or virus perpetrators use clever ways to gather e-mail addresses. Ask your ISP (Internet service provider) how to avoid spammers' tricks.
- Don't be complacent even if your ISP assures you it filters all your e-mail. Be on guard at all times.

Dos and don'ts

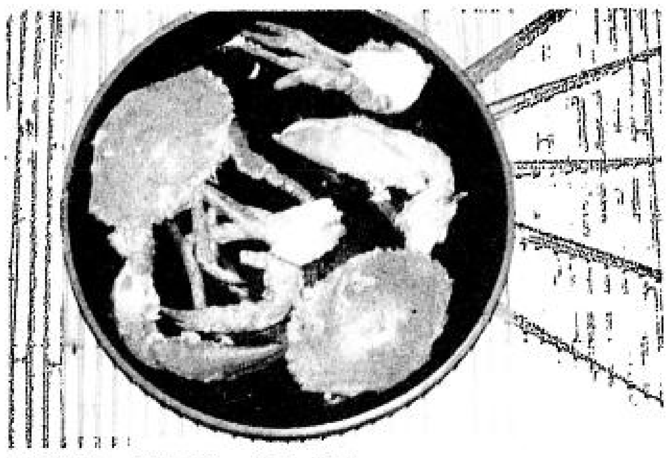
- Always make backups of important data.
- Install anti-virus, anti-spam software, and update often. You can set the programs to update the system automatically and regularly.
- Do not lend software or diskette.
- Don't open e-mail attachment unless you expect it.
- Don't forward e-mail containing messages that carry warning, solicitation, prayers. Delete.
- Don't reply to unsolicited mail (or spam) particularly special sale of medicine, slimming products, and health care products.
- Be wary of unsolicited mail that offers free subscription or membership. Do not at anytime click prompts like subscribe, unsubscribe, discontinue, and similar instructions.
- Be cautious about offers of free music and movie file-sharing programs.
- Close windows if ads, advisories, warning, and boxed promo pop up on the screen.

Lastly, if you find out that your computer is under attack and it refuses to run in spite of the anti-virus software, shut down computer. Contact your ISP technical support and ask for help.

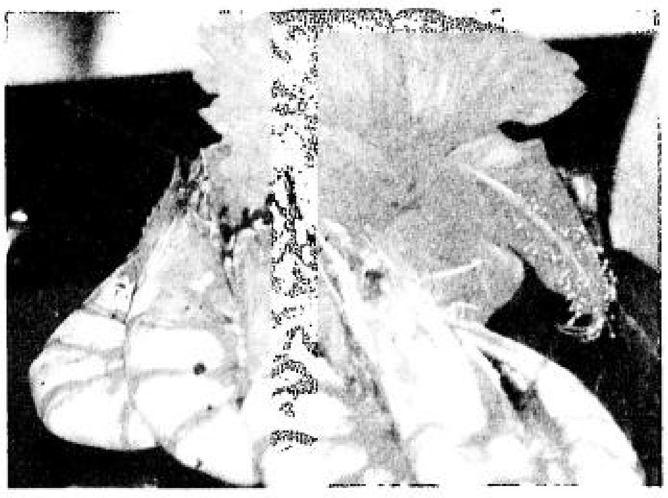
E-mail author at mariettagiron@hotmail.com.

Flavors that go best with Bora's sunset

FRESH Steamed Oysters, a sunset delight



HOUSE Specialty: Crispy Meaty Crabs



CHARCOAL Grilled Jumbo Shrimps

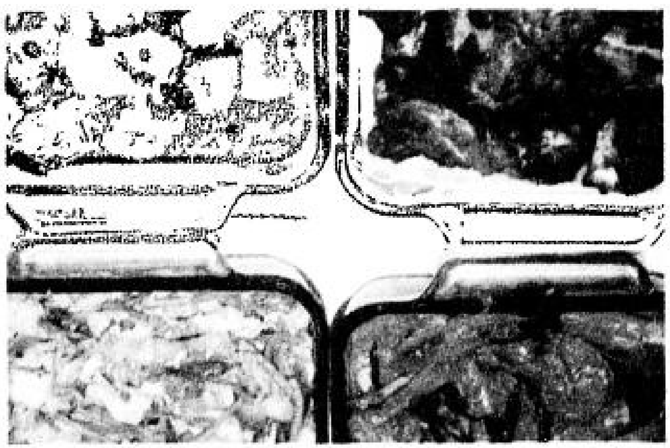
THE MOST delightful and friendly point for anyone new to the beaches of Boracay has got to be Mc Sandro Bistro, smack in the middle of the crossroads of D'Mall.

For a frequent Boracay visitor, a stop at Mc Sandro is a must if only to catch up on things with owners Louie Cruz and Mike Sandro Rieta, plus a taste of halo-halo, milkshakes or time-bomb sunset cocktails and smoothies.

The pizzas are a meal at Mc Sandro Bistro, which opened five years ago. They are the best home-made, thin crust pizzas you will ever get in the island, equally good or even better than the ones in Venice or Rome.

Favorite orders are *binagoongan*, stew simmered for hours in young fresh coconut milk and thinly sliced ginger until soft and creamy; varieties of *sinigang*, an all-time Filipino favorite using freshly harvested fish or shrimps; and a wide range of charcoal-grilled pork, chicken and fish constantly brushed with a family-kept secret marinade. Baked or tempura-style oysters, meaty juicy mussels cooked in rich ginger broth, and golden crispy tender crabs are regularly requested.

For private parties and group dinners, Mc Sandro's does not charge for corkage as long as the wines and spirits have been purchased from Ralph's Liquor store.



CLOCKWISE from top left: Blue Marlin baked in Lemon Butter Garlic with Dill and Capers, Lava Grilled Chicken, Shrimp Laing Style and Vegetarian Risotto

PIZZA Medley: Mc Sandro Special and Pepperoni Pizza

MC Sandro Bistro by night

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Email: cafeysabel@mydestiny.net

JANUARY SCHEDULE
RECREATIONAL AND ONE-DAY BUSINESS CLASS

BAKING CLASSES

January 20, Thurs. – LOW SUGAR AND SUGAR-FREE DESSERTS. Let Chef Gino teach you easy to follow Low and Sugar-Free Desserts for this season. The recipes are Coffee Pannacotta, Chocolate Ice Cream, Crème Brulee, Chocolate Souffle, Coffee Jelly with Orange Cream and Crepes with Amaretto Crème and Chocolate Sauce for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

January 25, Tues. – ELEGANT VALENTINE DESSERTS WITH CALLEBAUT CHOCOLATES. Chocolate Creme Brulee, Molten Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Crepes, Chocolate Hazelnut Semifreddo; Sugar-Free Chocolate PannaCotta are exquisite desserts for your loved ones to be taught to you by Chef Junjun. Accompanying desserts are Chocolate Caramel Sauce, Crème Anglaise sauce and more for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 – 4:00 p.m. NEW.

COOKING CLASSES

January 11, Tues. – GREAT TASTING SALADS 1. Let's make all these salads and it maybe the next sandwich filling, pasta sauce or the main course dish itself. Chef Jun-jun will show you how to make the following: Chicken Pecan and Grape Salad; Spinach and Pear Layer with Warm Bacon Sauce; Smoked Salmon Topped Iceberg Lettuce with Lemon Capers Dressing; Watercress and Salami Mix with Raspberry Vinaigrette; Fishy-Fatty Tomato with Mclean Salad Sauce and Arugula, Mango and Prosciutto Salad. From 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. for P1,200.00 including all ingredients. Plus a bonus recipe to go with your salad.

January 12, Wed. – ART OF FRIED AND APPETIZER, JAPANESE STYLE. Easy to follow recipe from Chef Rikichi Aoki that you can serve to your friends and family; the recipes are Tempura Ebi, Moriawase, Tempura Kakiage, Agedashi Tofu and Gyoza Yasai Itame for P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

January 13, Thurs. – SIMPLE SUSHI & SASHIMI WORKSHOP 1. This Sushi and Sashimi Workshop of Chef Aoki from Osaka, Japan where the student will learn simple and basic sushi and sashimi making that you can do and serve to your family and friends. Trimming of Tuna, Sushi Rice, California Maki, Tekka Maki, Temaki, Kanikyuri Sarada and Miso Soup are the recipes that he will be teaching. P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

January 14, Fri. – MODERN AND EASY PASTA SAUCES. In this class, Chef Jun-jun will demonstrate a new set of tasty pasta sauces with familiar ingredients to tickle your palate: Clam & Anchovy in Olive oil; Amnida's Delight; Gorgonzola and Red Bell Pepper Sauce; Tuna and Sun-dried Tomatoes; Lemon Butter Sauce and Three Mushroom Cream with White Truffle Oil. Recipes include all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. for P1,000.00

January 15, Sat. – COMMERCIAL AND HOME SIOPAO MAKING. Chef Gene gives simple and easy to make steamed Buns a touch for home and business. Recipes include Siopao Dough, Asado, Bola-bola (Pork and Chicken), Braised Pork (Lo Mah), Black Mongo Filling, Cuapao, Silver Spoon Bread, Kamchay and Siopao Sauce for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 9:00 – 1:00 p.m.

January 17, Mon. – SPECIAL EVERYDAY MEALS 1. This easy meal that Chef Gino teaches is meant to put a smile on every person seated on the table. Recipes include Fried Mozzarella with Marinara Sauce, Gambas, Chicken Parmiggiano, Grape Salad, Fillet of Steak with 3 Mushroom Gravy and Butterscotch Cream Pie. For P1,000.00 including ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

January 18, Tues. – SPECIAL EVERYDAY MEALS 2. Chef Gino will teach us another set of easy to do meals like Stuffed Mushrooms, Salpicado, Chicken ala King in Phyllo Cups, Penne with Four Cheese Sauce, Salmon Meuniere with Lemon Dill Veloute, Bananas with Rhum and Raisins. You will also learn how to make homemade tomato sauce from scratch. Recipes include all ingredients from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. for P1,000.00.

January 19, Wed. – EVERYBODY LOVES CHICKEN 1. Chicken dishes from Chef Junjun for the whole family to enjoy. Chicken Pernis, Dutch Oven Roast Chicken, Spanish Chicken Stew, Chicken Teriyaki, Oven BBQ Chicken and Pollo Parmigiana for P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 – 4:00 p.m.

January 21, Fri. – TAPAS: SPANISH BAR FAVORITES 1. Delicious Appetizers from Spain will be demonstrated by Chef Gene Gonzalez, the recipes are Almejas al Vapor, Tortilla Madrileña, Callos, Esparragos con Jamon, Huevos con Salmon Ahumado, Hojaldrados de Chorizo and Mejillones Rellenos for P1,000.00 from 10:00 – 2:00 p.m.

January 22, Sat. – TEAHOUSE SPECIALTIES 1. Take the specialties of the best teahouses from Chef Gene Gonzalez and prepare them in your kitchen – simply! Recipes include Spicy Eggplant In Pot, Braised Soy Beef, Shrimp Dumpling, Amoy Lumpia, Drunken Chicken and Favorite Lemon Chicken for P1,000.00 from 9:00 - 12:00 noon

January 23, Sun. – EASY THAI HOME COOKING. Easy to prepare original Thai home cooking recipes like Pnk King Tua (Spiced Pork with Yard Beans), Phak Bung Kapi (Water Spinach in Shrimp Paste), Khao Pad Sapparot (Fried Rice with Pineapple), Ladna, Pat Kaprow Nua (Beef with Holy Basil) and Khanom Saku Thaeng Tai (Melon and Sago with Coco Milk) from Chef Gene Gonzalez for you to learn. Recipes include all ingredients from 9:00 12:00 noon for P1,000.00 including all ingredients.

January 24, Mon. – DAVE'S COMFORT FOOD: LUTONG BAHAY. Another set of new recipes will be shared by Chef David Fajardo, recipes that can be cook regularly in our own homes. The recipes are Nilaga, Sinigang, Adobado and Menudo Espesyal. The recipes include all ingredients from 10:00 – 2:00 p.m. for P1,200.00 NEW CLASS.

January 26, Wed. – ASIAN RICE & SNACKS. Chef Gene's Simple Asian Rice and Snacks recipes like Soft Spicy Rolls (Vietnam), Vietnamese Clay Pot Rice, Flying Red Dragon Shake, Bun Cha Hanoi, Gene's Eight Treasure Rice in Lotus Leaf, Petaling Clay Pot Chicken Rice (Malaysia) and Nasi Ikan Masin (Malaysia) will be demonstrated in this class for P1,000.00 from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m.

January 27 & 28, Thurs. & Fri. – COOKING FOR TWO. Whether it's pure romance or beating the crowded Valentines restaurants, Chef Gino gives tasty meaning to cooking – Cooking for 2. Recipes include a no-fail shopping list. Learn to prepare Duet of Pumpkin and Spinach Soup, Proscuitto and Olive Pasta, Salmon Fillet with Dill Crème Reduction, Rib-eye Steak with Onion Demiglace and Garlic Mashed Potatoes and Mango Fritters with Chocolate Ginger Sauce for the 1st Day and on the 2nd Day learn Mixed Greens with Tarragon Vinaigrette, Quick Onion Soup, Seabass Meuniere with Chanterelle Cream, Mediterranean Style Lamb Chops and Apple Crumble with Butterscotch Sauce topped with Vanilla Ice Cream for P1,000.00 per day from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

January 29, Sat. – TEAHOUSE SPECIALTIES 2. Learn to make these Chinese Teahouse dishes at home. Recipes include Century Egg and Tofu, Parchment Chicken, Onion Cakes, Soy Sauce Chicken, Sichuan Chicken with Peanuts and Mu Shu Pork for P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 9:00 – 12:00 noon

January 30, Sun. – TAPAS: SPANISH BAR FAVORITES 2. Sequels to Chef Gene's arrays of Spanish appetizers, the recipes are Mondongo Serrano, Croquetas de Pollo, Mejillones con Tigre, Milojas con Salmon Ahumado and Milojas con Chorizo for P1,000.00 including all ingredients from 9:00 - 12:00 noon.

January 31, Mon. – COOKING WITH GATA. New recipes from Chef David Fajardo will be demonstrated to us that can be served to our family and friends. The recipes are Kohol sa Gata, Ginataang Hito, Chicken with Gata, Sinaing na Isda sa Gata at Ginataang Puso ng Saging. P1,200.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU COULD CALL AT LEAST TWO DAYS BEFORE THE CLASS FOR RESERVATION.

THE PROFESSIONAL CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM

The Professional Culinary Arts Program prepares students for professional entry into the food service industry. This intensive program integrates classical and modern culinary techniques with kitchen management skills. Students learn how to prepare soups, sauces, vegetables, entrees, breads, pastries and desserts. They will learn how to identify, fabricate and portion meat, poultry, fish and shellfish. The course will also provide the introductory skills on Asian cooking, wine appreciation and table service.

The program is a hands-on training series for students to gain proficiency in various skills needed to perform at professional standards in a commercial kitchen. The students will also prepare a Legacy buffet. The program has Internship or In-house Practicum for 250 hours and Externship or Outside Practicum for 200 hours. Enrollment includes 3 sets of uniforms, chef's kit, manual and all the ingredients to be used.

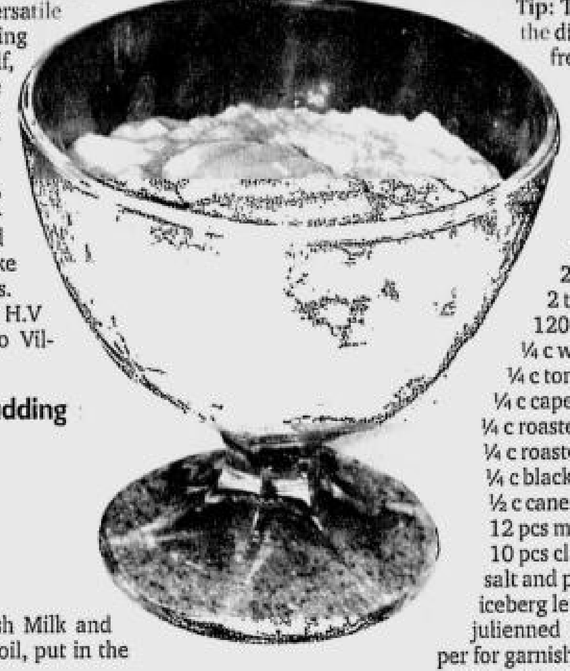
Classes will start on February. Enrollment is ongoing. For inquiries and reservations, call 726-9326 or 725-5089 and look for Marilyn or Glady.

The versatile rice

ED Quimson of Chef Ed's restaurant proved at the Julius Maggi Kitchen recently that rice is more versatile than generally believed. Saying rice could be a dish in itself, Quimson showed that the grain could be used in virtually all types of meals—salad, main course or dessert.

In preparing rice dishes, he said there were no specific rules. Even leftovers could be mixed with rice to make unique and appetizing dishes.

Chef Ed's restaurant is at H.V de la Costa Street, Salcedo Village, Makati.



CINNAMON Rice Milk Pudding: sweet, creamy and filling

Cinnamon Rice Milk Pudding (Arroz Con Leche)

4 liters Nestlé Fresh Milk
1 c rice
2 c sugar
lemon rind/*dayap*
cinnamon stick
cinnamon powder

In a pot, put Nestlé Fresh Milk and rice. When milk begins to boil, put in the cinnamon and lemon rind.

When the rice is well cooked, remove the cinnamon stick and lemon rind. Add the sugar while continuing to boil. Continue mixing until a creamy consistency is achieved.

Let cool. Serve with cinnamon powder.

Serves 10-12.

Nutritional content per serving:
Carbohydrates: 33 g
Protein: 24 g
Fats: 12 g
Calories: 336 Kcal

Dayap rind may replace lemon in the recipe. If desired, use vanilla extract or other flavorings instead of cinnamon.

Tip: To decrease the fat content of the dish, use low-fat milk and half-fresh milk.

Seafood and Rice Salad with Shrimp Vinaigrette (Rice Salad)

1 ½ c cooked rice
200 g onion rings
1 tbsp garlic
2 Maggi Shrimp Broth cubes
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
120 g shrimp
¼ c white wine
¼ c tomatoes
¼ c caper
¼ c roasted red bell peppers, cubed
¼ c roasted green bell peppers, cubed
¼ c black olives, sliced
½ c cane vinegar
12 pcs mussels
10 pcs clams
salt and pepper and sugar to taste
iceberg lettuce
julienned carrots for garnish bell pepper for garnish

Sauté onions, garlic, Maggi Shrimp Broth cubes in olive oil.

Add shrimps, de-glaze with white wine. Take out the shrimps and set aside.

In the same pan, add the cane vinegar and the rest of the salad ingredients. Season with salt, pepper and sugar to taste.

Serve on a bed of lettuce. Top with julienned carrots and green bell pepper.

Serves four.

Nutritional content per serving:
Carbohydrates: 41 g
Protein: 11 g

RISOTTO Balls

SEAFOOD and Rice Salad displays the versatility of the white grain.

Fats: 3 g
Calories: 83 Kcal

To roast the bell pepper, coat with little olive oil and season with salt before placing in a very hot sauté pan. Roast on all sides until the skin is charred and blistered.

Tip: Red onion tastes great in salads. It has a sweeter taste and has fewer carbohydrates than white/yellow onions.

Crisp Cheese and Cream Rice (Risotto Balls)

100 g deboned chicken
1/2 c olive oil
1/4 c Maggi Savor
2 tbsp garlic
1 pc bell pepper
2 pcs onions
¼ c white wine
1 pc Maggi Chicken Broth cubes
3 c cooked rice
salt and pepper to taste
½ c flour
½ egg yolk
1 c breadcrumbs
½ c Parmesan cheese
¼ olive oil

Marinate the chicken in olive oil, Maggi Savor and garlic.

In a pan, sauté green bell pepper and onions until caramelized. Add the chicken and Maggi Chicken Broth cube and continue cooking for five minutes.

Add cooked rice then the rest of the ingredients. Season with salt and pepper.

Let cool. Form into small balls. Dredge in flour, egg and breadcrumbs, then deep-fry until golden brown.

Makes 30 balls or six to eight servings.

Nutritional content per serving:
Carbohydrates: 8 g
Protein: 8 g
Fats: 36 g
Calories: 412 Kcal

Use any regular cheese in place of parmesan if desired.

Tip: If deep-frying is not an option, bake the risotto balls in the oven or turbo broiler. Chill the risotto balls to harden before baking.

Call 8980061 or visit www.goodfood.com.ph.

Love that choice!

RUDY Ramin and Mark de Joya of Lady's Choice with restaurateur Glenda Barretto at the launch of new Lady's Choice Mayonnaise

THE SOYBEAN, which was first cultivated in China 3,000 years ago, has spun off a wide range of products, from tofu to soy sauce to soy milk to soybean oil.

The last is now being used to produce mayonnaise, that indispensable condiment to meat and fish that is also used all over the world as sandwich spread and salad dressing.

In the Philippines, Lady's Choice Mayonnaise has been whipped, spread and folded into the unlimited range of fare that makes up a typical meal.

Knowing this, the makers of Lady's Choice Mayonnaise have made sure that the product contains essential ingredients such as soybean oil, which is rich in essential polyunsaturated fatty acids, cholesterol free and an excellent source of fiber, vitamins and minerals. Food lovers can have guilt-free and responsible indulgence.

Soy protein in the daily diet can help decrease risk of developing cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancer, and even improve bone health.

Here is a recipe from Via Mare's Glenda Barretto using Lady's Choice mayonnaise made with soybean oil:

Paella with Lady's Choice Ai-oli

100 g slab bacon, cut into one-inch cubes
2 tbsp olive oil
30 g garlic, minced
100 g onions, diced
200 g tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
100 g red and green bell pepper, cut into strips
75 g *chorizo bilbao* (garlic sausage) sliced diagonally
1 tbsp paprika
pinch of saffron, soaked in 2 tbsp water
2 pcs bay leaves
100 g white fish, sticks
100 g squid, skinned, scored
100 g clams
150 g mussels
500 g about 6 pcs) prawns, peeled and de-veined
450 g long-grain rice
5 c chicken stock
50 g green beans
Sea salt to taste
Freshly ground peppercorn

Garnish:
2 hard-boiled eggs, cut into wedges
50 g cooked peas
2 tbsp black olives
2 tsp chopped parsley

Lady's Choice Ai-oli:
1 c Lady's Choice Mayonnaise
Chopped garlic (to taste)
Salt and pepper (to taste)

In a heavy pan, preferably *paellera*, heat the olive oil and fry the bacon until fat is rendered then remove bacon and drain on kitchen paper.

Add to the pan, the garlic, onion, tomato, bell peppers, bacon and sausage, and sauté for three to four minutes, then add paprika, saffron, bay leaves and seafoods. Simmer for about one minute. Remove seafood and set aside.

Add the rice and continue to sauté until it is well coated with oil. Add the stock to the pan and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook until the rice is almost done, then add the seafoods and green beans. Cover pan with a tightly fitting lid and cook until the liquid has been absorbed by the rice, approximately 15 minutes.

Lady's Choice Ai-Oli

Mix in a shallow bowl one cup of Lady's Choice Mayonnaise, finely chopped garlic, salt and pepper. Transfer mixture in a squeeze bottle for easy drizzling on to the paella.

Garnish with eggs, peas, olives, Lady's Choice Ai-Oli and parsley.

TOFU desserts: Crème Brûlée, Jelly and Cheesecake, all by Barretto

BARRETTO'S main course was an innovation of paella with Lady's Choice Ai-Oli

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Learn a dozen bangus recipes

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts starts its 2005 classes with the following:

Jan. 10—Bangus! (all new)—Appetizer, soup, salad and main dishes. Over 12 easy and delicious *bangus* recipes, from Chicharon, Baked Bangus Teriyaki-style, Lumpia to Kare-kare

Jan. 12—Swiss and German Favorites: Raclette, Cheese Fondue, Beef Fondue with Classic Sauces, Spareribs and Sauerkraut, Wiener Schnitzel with Spaetzel, German Potato Salad, Bavarian Cream with Strawberries

Jan. 14—Oriental Stews (all new): Delicious Coca-Cola Stew with Leeks, Thai Beef Stew with Chili Sauce, Ox-tail and Tamarind Stew, Nonya Style Duck Stew, Oriental Chicken with Mushrooms

Call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162 or 0917-8399888.

New baking ingredient launched

PUREFOODS Flour has launched Bake Best Baking Powder, a double-acting leavening agent in free-flowing form.

The product was launched in Bacolod City during the Bacolod, Negros Occidental Bakers Association (Bacnoba) forum. San Miguel Inc. Flour Business says Bake Best is its response to the baking industry's demand for cost-efficient and reasonably priced ingredients that will not compromise quality.

Bake Best blends baking soda, sodium aluminum sulfate, calcium sulfate, monocalcium phosphate and wheat flour. It has a good balance of soda and acids to provide the largest volume, ideal color and satisfying taste.

Bake Best double-acting baking powder starts to release carbon dioxide during mixing and completes the process during the baking or steaming stage.

This double-acting action ensures the finest grain and texture in the finished products.

Bake Best is ideal for baked products like chiffon cakes, sponge cakes and jelly rolls, butter cakes, chocolate cakes, and other types of cakes, cookies and biscuits, muffins, hotcakes, waffles, quick breads; and other products like doughnuts and steamed cakes such as *puto*.

Bake Best is used by food and baking companies like French Baker, WL Foods, Big E, Cindy's, Cherry Hill, Goddess and Fresh Dough.

It comes in two pack sizes: 14-kg pails and 1-kg x 14 packs in shipping cases, ideal for bakeshop chains, bakery ingredients stores and other trade players.

Delectable sunrise dishes

DINING OUT

ITALIANNI'S serves king-size breakfast fare 7:30-10 a.m. daily at its branches in Libis, Greenhills and Greenbelt. Offered are Continental Breakfast and Italian Sausage Roesti, French Toast, Ham and Cheese French Toasts, Fresh Fruit Bowl, Ham and Cheese, Cheese and Mushroom, Quattro Formaggio, Special Omelettes, Eggs Benedict Florentine and Potato Frittata Italiano.

BRAZIL, Brazil offers Italian Calamari, Codfish Lasagna, Drunk Fillet, Steamed Oysters, Shrimp with Catupiry Cheese, Gourmet Chicken and Churrasco. Brazil, Brazil is located in Metro Walk, Meralco Avenue, Pasig.

TASTY Fresh Salad Bar and Café presents Maranao Halal Beef with gravy, Machado, Breaded Fried Chicken, Buko and Fruit Salad, Biko, Kalamay, Bibingka and Sapin-Sapin. Call 0927-8778414.

CHINESE Monk casual dining restaurant offers kiddie party packages. Dishes include Birthday Noodles, Shanghai Rolls, Monks Fried Chicken, Sweet and Sour Pork, Beef with Broccoli, Yang Chow Fried Rice. Clowns, party cakes, giveaways, balloons and party decor are also available. Call 8973785, 8974129 or 8969429.

BURGOO American Bar and Restaurant recently opened at the Promenade, Greenhills, San Juan. The restaurant offers Oklahoma-style Grilled Baby Back Ribs, Grilled Pork Chop, Supreme Sampler, Seafood Linguini, New Orleans Platter and Raspberry Cheesecake. Call 9277424, 8981815 to 17, 6875254 or 7263578.

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Designer for movie, music stars says no one measures up to Elvis

NASHVILLE—The Mexican-born fashion designer who created glittering jackets for such stars as Elvis Presley and Dolly Parton thinks that today's celebrities don't measure up.

The man whose rhinestone fetish puts the sparkle in the stage personas of many stars is silver-haired Manuel Cuevas, 65, who reserves his harshest criticism for male performers.

"You get young men who don't have the culture or the brains to understand culture with their plastic hats and bad-looking jeans. They actually look dirty," said the designer, who is based in Nashville and is known by his first name.

Manuel made his name designing glittering outfits for dozens of movie and music stars including Parton, Johnny Cash and Bob Dylan, who once wore a Manuel suit while performing for the Pope.

He outfitted Elvis Presley with his first spangled outfit and put the skulls and roses on the Grateful Dead's duds and the tongue on outfits worn by the Rolling Stones.

'Nudie' start

Manuel, who is the subject of a current exhibition at a museum in Nashville, first picked up a sewing needle at age seven. After earning a college degree with a major in psychology he emigrated to Los Angeles from his native Coalcoman, along Mexico's central Pacific coast.

He got his start with famed Hollywood designer "Nudie" Cohn, turning out conventional attire for such actors as Robert Mitchum, Robert Taylor, Robert Redford, Marlon Brando, Steve McQueen and Frank Sinatra—the crooner once gave Manuel a $1,000 tip.

He also worked with Edith Head, a top clothing designer to the Hollywood movie studios, helping outfit James Dean for the movie "Giant," Paul Newman for "Cool Hand Luke," and John Travolta for "Urban Cowboy."

"But I wanted to do more than conventional designs," he said. "As a kid, I was always the white bean in the black bean soup." Thus began his foray into sequins and spangles.

Rhinestone count

"Everything I create is for a unique personality," he said of his intensely detailed, hand-embroidered outfits that sell for as much as $25,000. One he created for Johnny Cash recently sold at auction for $67,000.

Asked how many rhinestones he uses in a typical outfit, Manuel said: "About ten thousand in the jacket alone. But it's worth it."

Cash thanked Manuel for his work with the gift of a guitar inscribed with the words "Keep on Pickin'."

"That goes back to 1957 or so when his song 'I Walk the Line' was a big hit," Manuel said in an interview prior to the opening of the exhibition of his work at the Frist Art Center.

"I designed for (Cash's wife) June Carter Cash, too, something I really enjoyed. I like to make women pretty.

Bridal flowerpots

"I've never understood why they choose white for bridal gowns. They should be like beautiful flowerpots with lots of color. I have designed many gowns for women that brought out their distinctive beauty."

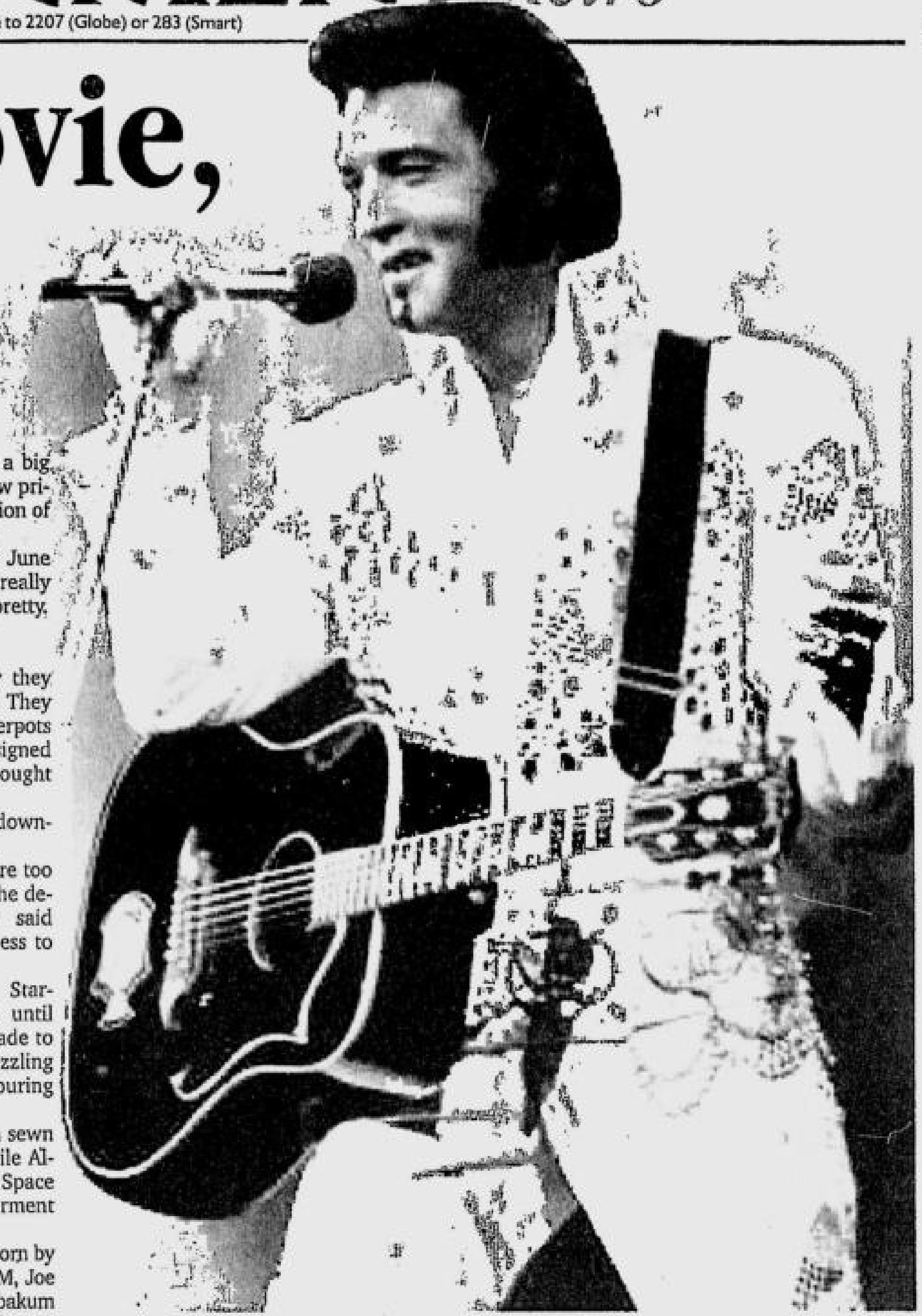
Couture for men is on a downswing, he said.

"Men don't dress well. They're too conservative. They should let the designer do the designing," said Manuel, who moved his business to Nashville in 1989.

The exhibition, "Manuel: Star-Spangled Couture" continues until May 22. Manuel needed a decade to create its centerpiece: 50 dazzling red, white and blue jackets honouring each US state.

Tennessee's jacket features a sewn Grand Ole Opry backdrop, while Alabama's is adorned with a US Space Camp badge and Alaska's garment has reindeer and native art.

A side gallery features suits worn by Mike Mills of the rock band REM, Joe Perry of Aerosmith, Dwight Yoakum (bearing his trademark slashed knees) and Linda Ronstadt. *Reuters*



MANUEL CUEVAS' celebrated rhinestone fetish found a perfect showcase in Presley.

'Fockers' US top grosser for 2 weeks now

"MEET THE Fockers" was the most popular movie in North America for a second weekend, and has now earned almost as much as its 2000 predecessor, "Meet the Parents," did in its entire run, according to studio estimates issued on Sunday.

The family comedy, starring Robert De Niro, Ben Stiller and Dustin Hoffman, sold $42.8 million worth of tickets in the three days beginning Friday. Its total after 12 days rose to $163.4 million. "Meet the Parents," by contrast, ended its run with $166 million.

Both films were distributed in North America by Universal Pictures, a unit of General Electric Co.-controlled NBC Universal, which split the budget with closely held DreamWorks SKG.

"Fockers" set two records over the weekend. Its Friday haul of $12.2 million was the best for New Year's Eve, beating "Cast Away's" four-year-old record of $8.5 million. It continued its winning ways the next day with sales of $18 million, surpassing the New Year's Day record of $12.8 million set last year by "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King."

No new releases

As is the case for this time of the year, there were no new releases in the top 10, and the rankings were little changed. The children's comedy "Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events" held steady at a distant No. 2 with $14.7 million, followed by the Howard Hughes biopic "The Aviator," which rose one place to No. 3 with $11.2 million.

The TV cartoon adaptation "Fat Albert" fell one to No. 4 with $10.7 million, and the all-star crime caper "Ocean's Twelve" was stable at No. 5 with $9.2 million.

"Lemony Snicket" was released by Paramount Pictures, a unit of Viacom Inc. "The Aviator" was released by Miramax Films, a unit of Walt Disney Co. "Fat Albert" was released by Twentieth Century Fox, a unit of News Corp.'s Fox Entertainment Group Inc.

"Ocean's Twelve" was released by Warner Bros. Pictures, a unit of Time Warner Inc, which partnered on the project with Village Roadshow Ltd.

THE TOP 10 LIST

1) Meet the Fockers
2) Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events
3) The Aviator
4) Fat Albert
5) Ocean's Twelve
6) National Treasure
7) Spanglish
8) The Polar Express
9) Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Phantom of the Opera
10) Darkness

ET Online

DUSTIN HOFFMAN and Barbra Streisand as the Fockers provide stark contrast to the movie's other set of in-laws, portrayed by Robert de Niro and Blythe Danner.

Iranian director makes first post-war Iraqi film

IRANIAN director Bahman Ghobadi had no intention of making the first feature film to emerge from post-war Iraq, but the children he met in northern Iraq left him with no choice.

Ghobadi's compelling film, "Turtles Can Fly," which follows a group of Iraqi Kurd orphans in the days before the fall of Saddam Hussein, has scooped festival awards in the United States, Spain and Japan, and is Iran's entry to the Oscars.

But it was almost never made.

"I was making an urban film in Tehran just before the war started in Iraq," Ghobadi, 36, told Reuters.

During a trip to Iraq shortly after Saddam's fall to show his second feature, "Marooned in Iraq," Ghobadi was mesmerized by the young Kurds he saw, many maimed by land mines and scarred by the brutality of Saddam's regime.

"When I saw these children, the issue changed for me. When I returned to Iran I couldn't sleep for a while. I went to Iraq to make this film," he said. "This is an anti-war movie and my personal view of the US war in Iraq. The film shows real pictures of the lives of the Iraqis today."

Filmed on location in Iraqi Kurdistan under the protection of 30 bodyguards and using non-professional actors, "Turtles Can Fly" paints a different picture of Iraq than the one most Western audiences have seen through satellite news channels.

"(US President George W.) Bush and Saddam had become the superstars on the satellite channels. I showed the opposite of this. The superstars in my film were people and children and Saddam and Bush were in the background," he said.

Untrained actors

As with his highly acclaimed debut feature "A Time for Drunken Horses" it is Ghobadi's ability to draw remarkable performances from young untrained actors that has impressed festival jurors and touched audiences.

He spent months combing northern Iraq to find children to play the parts of a 13-year-old Satellite, named for his ability to rig up reception for TV channels bringing news of the war; an armless boy who disarms land mines with his teeth; and his mysterious and haunted sister.

"If you want the audience to believe your movie, you must bring elements of reality, such as real locations and real stories. If it's not real, then the amateur actors who play in my films won't be able to perform well. They act well because it's their own story and because they have experienced it," he said.

Ghobadi said he felt it was his duty to help the young actors.

Thus, a blind 3-year-old toddler whom Satellite rescues from a minefield in the film has had operations to restore his sight; and Soran Ebrahim, who plays Satellite, will work as assistant director on an upcoming project with another Ghobadi protegé who starred in one of his earlier films.

Stirrings

Enthused by making "Turtles Can Fly," which opens in London on Jan. 7, Ghobadi plans another film in Iraq and says the long-dormant Iraqi film industry has begun to stir.

"Film projects have started. Movie theaters which had been closed for almost 30 years are now being re-opened," he said, while cautioning that the process will take time.

"It has only been in the last decade that Iranian films are going to the international market. No one should expect today's Iraqi cinema to achieve this with its first productions."

Ghobadi, an Iranian Kurd, is lending his backing and experience, helping to set up a filmmaking institute in northern Iraq and equipping cinemas there. *ET Online*

BAHMAN GHOBALDI'S "Turtles Can Fly" (left) has scooped festival awards in US, Spain and Japan, and is an Oscar entry. Prior to this, he made "Marooned in Iraq" (above).

SM CINEMA movietime

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VIC SOTTO KRISTINE HERMOSA

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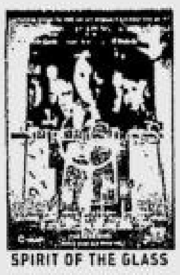
SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

PANAGHOY SA SUBA

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DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS

1 MANO PO 3
2 SO HAPPY TOGETHER

METRO MANILA

sm megamall

1	MANO PO 3
2	SIGAW
3	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
5	ENTENG KABISOTE
6	AISHITE IMASU 1941
7	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
8	MANO PO 3
9	LASTIKMAN
10	ENTENG KABISOTE
11	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
12	PANAGHOYSA SUBA

sm city fairview

1	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3	MANO PO 3
4	SIGAW
5	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
6	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
7	ENTENG KABISOTE
8	ENTENG KABISOTE
9	AISHITE IMASU 1941
10	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
11	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
12	LASTIKMAN

sm city manila

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	MANO PO 3
3	AISHITE IMASU 1941
4	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
5	SIGAW
6	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
7	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
8	SIGAW
9	ENTENG KABISOTE
10	ENTENG KABISOTE
11	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
12	LASTIKMAN

sm city sta. mesa

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	MANO PO 3
3	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
4	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
5	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
6	AISHITE IMASU 1941
7	LASTIKMAN
8	SIGAW
9	ENTENG KABISOTE
10	SO HAPPY TOGETHER

sm city southmall

1	LASTIKMAN
2	AISHITE IMASU 1941
3	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
4	ENTENG KABISOTE
5	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
6	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
7	ENTENG KABISOTE
8	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
9	SIGAW
10	MANO PO 3

sm city north edsa

1	MANO PO 3
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
5	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
6	LASTIKMAN
7	AISHITE IMASU 1941
8	SIGAW

sm cinema tutuban

1	SIGAW
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4	SO HAPPY TOGETHER

sm supercenter sucat

1	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
2	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
3	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
4	LASTIKMAN

sm city bicutan

1	MANO PO 3
2	ENTENG KABISOTE
3	AISHITE IMASU 1941
4	SIGAW

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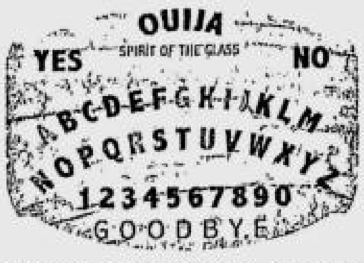
What is the name the spirit murmurs everytime they haunt them in the movie **SPIRIT OF THE GLASS**? The clues can be found below. Can you decipher the message? Watch **SPIRIT OF THE GLASS** to find out.

Write SPIRIT OF THE GLASS, your answer, name, address, contact details and signature in a piece of paper and drop them at dropboxes located at all SM Cinema for a chance to win **1 of 20 Good Fortune Bracelet** from **Charms & Crystal by Joy Lim.**



Subject to MTRCB Rating

Promo Runs: December 20, 2004 - January 7, 2005
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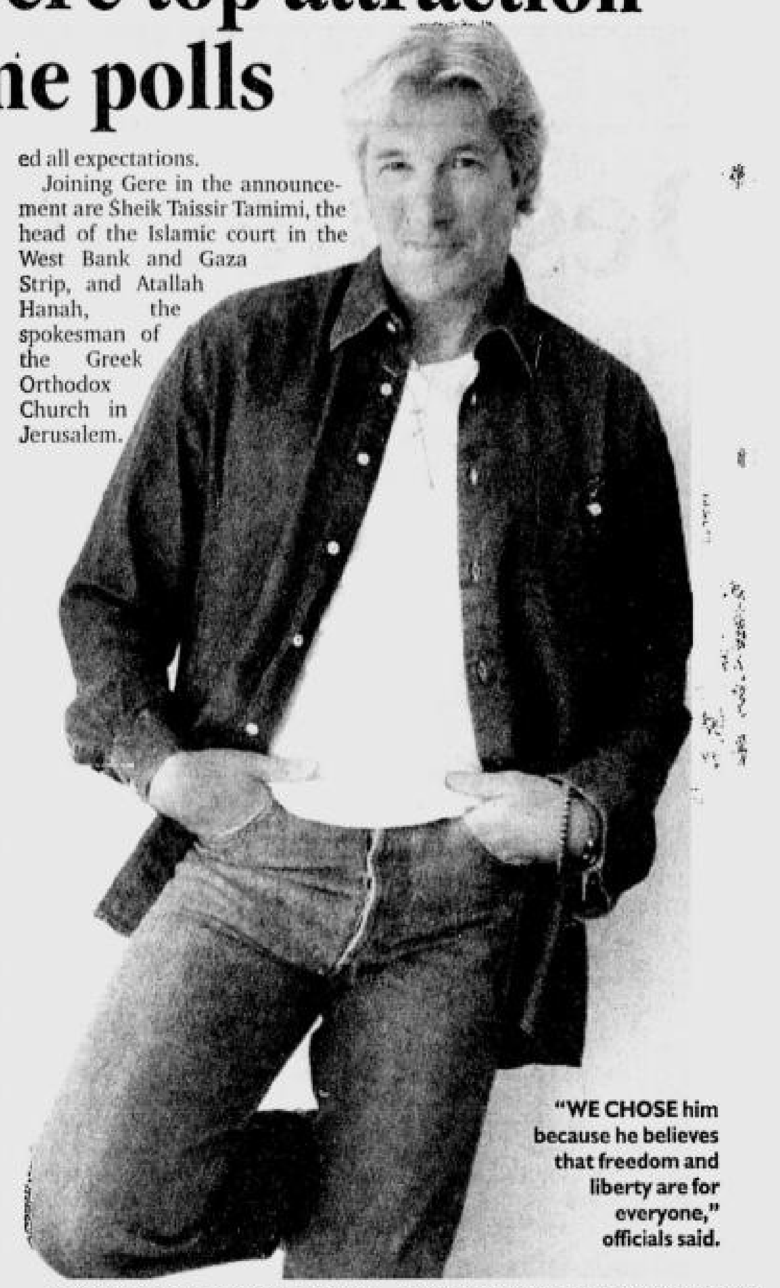
Richard Gere top attraction in Palestine polls



"WE CHOSE him because he believes that freedom and liberty are for everyone," officials said.

JERUSALEM—A pro-peace group is hoping that a potent mix of Hollywood glamour and religion will motivate Palestinians to vote in next week's presidential elections—and their star attraction is Hollywood actor Richard Gere.

Gere, together with an Islamic cleric and a Greek Orthodox Church official, recorded a public service announcement calling on the Palestinians to vote in the Jan. 9 election to replace Yasser Arafat.

"Hi, I'm Richard Gere and I'm speaking for the entire world. We're with you during this election time. It's really important: Get out and vote," Gere said, according to a transcript of the announcement obtained by The Associated Press.

H'wood backing

Gere ended the 80-second announcement produced by the pro-peace group, "One Voice," with an appeal in Arabic: "Take part in the elections."

The ad is to be aired on Palestinian TV and Arabic satellite channels in the next few days, said Fathi Darwish, a Palestinian director of "One Voice."

The group tries to harness the power of ordinary citizens to push for creation of a Palestinian state to live peacefully next to Israel. The people power is backed by Hollywood stars like Danny DeVito and Rhea Perlman. Its Internet website claims support from actors Brad Pitt, Jennifer Aniston and Edward Norton.

"We chose Richard Gere because he believes that freedom and liberty are for everyone," Darwish said. "He is a known supporter of the Palestinian people."

Gere has made a number of visits to Israel and the Palestinian areas in the last few years. A spokeswoman for Gere had no immediate comment.

Who's that?

Turnout for the presidential elections, the first held since 1996, is expected to be high. Last week EU observers said voter registration exceeded all expectations.

Joining Gere in the announcement are Sheik Taissir Tamimi, the head of the Islamic court in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and Atallah Hanah, the spokesman of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem.

In the broadcast transcript Tamimi said, "To the Palestinian people, it is a vital process, national necessity and religious obligation."

"We want democracy in our country, a place with freedom, and freedom of speech," Hanah said in the ad.

Hanah said he and Tamimi recorded the broadcast together. Gere made the recording in the US, Darwish said.

While Gere was chosen for his star appeal, it's not clear how much celebrity status he has among the Palestinians.

"I've never heard of him before," Hanah said of his co-star. *AP*

MMTA
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MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
Telephone: 633.2227 / 633.7851 loc. 171

PREMIERE THEATRE
(DOLBY) MANO PO 3 GP

1 (DOLBY)	OCEAN'S TWELVE	PG13
2 (DOLBY)	KUNG FU HUSTLE	PG13
3 (DOLBY)	BLADE TRINITY	R13
4 (DOLBY)	SO HAPPY TOGETHER	PG13

SUPER CINERAMA
isetann
CINERAMA COMPLEX RECTO
tel 733.4238

1. (DOLBY)	BAD SIGAW
2.	AISHITE IMASU 1941
3.	HAPPY TOGETHER
4.	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
5.	ENTENG KABISOTE

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4 (SDDS)	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6 (DOLBY)	RESERVE
7 (DTS)	RESERVE
8	RESERVE
9	RESERVE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	MANO PO - 3
2	ENTENG KABISOTE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	MANO PO - 3
2	HAPPY TOGETHER
3	AISHITE IMASU 1941
4 (DTS)	SIGAW

Filinvest
FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	MANO PO
2 (SDDS)	ENTENG KABISOTE
3 (DTS)	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
4 GOLD (DTS)	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	AISHITE IMASU 1941
6 GOLD (SDDS)	SIGAW
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	LASTIKMAN
8 [illegible]	LASTIKMAN
9 [illegible]	HAPPY TOGETHER
10 [illegible]	LASTIKMAN

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
2	HAPPY TOGETHER
3	LASTIKMAN

MARKET! MARKET!
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
3	LASTIKMAN
4	AISHITE IMASU 1941

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007

1 (DOLBY)	SIGAW
2	AISHITE IMASU 1941

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	BLADE III
2 (DOLBY)	OCEAN'S TWELVE
3 (DOLBY)	KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 (DOLBY)	HAPPY TOGETHER

THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT
Araneta Center
ALIMALL CINEPLEX
Tel. 911-3101 loc. 8242 / 8281 / 8397

1	(Dolby)	OCEAN'S TWELVE
2	(SDDS)	BLADE TRINITY
3	(DTS)	KUNG FU HUSTLE
4	(Dolby)	SO HAPPY TOGETHER
5	(Dolby)	ENTENG KABISOTE

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986

1	RESERVED
2	RESERVED
3	LASTIKMAN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	AISHITE IMASU 1941
5	PANAGHOY SA SUBA

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285

1	ENTENG KABISOTE
2	SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
3	PANAGHOY SA SUBA
4	HAPPY TOGETHER
5 (DOLBY)	LASTIKMAN
6	SIGAW

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

'Dance Idol' named Jan. 8

THE SEARCH is on for the best school and professional dance groups in Metro Manila.

StreetPark Productions Inc. (SPI) presents "Dance Idol," possibly the biggest dance competition in the country, on Jan. 8 at the UP Theater in Diliman, Quezon City.

The categories are: cheer dance (high school level), cheer dance, jazz and street dance (college level), and an open level for student-based and professional dance groups.

Winning groups in each category will win P25,000 in cash plus gifts, and the opportunity for their very own dance video to be produced by SPI.

"Dance Idol" is sponsored by Mirinda, in cooperation with the Philippine Sports Commission, Kotex, Pacific Internet, Kublai's, and Gasoline Alley. Media sponsors are Wave 89.9, RX 93.1, 97.1 dwLS FM, 103.5 K-Lite, Candy, Seventeen, Fudge Magazine, and Yehey.com.

Part of the event's proceeds is earmarked for the scholarship program of Shining Light Foundation Inc. Tickets will be sold at P150.

For inquiries and details, call 436-8882 to 83, e-mail info@streetparkprod.com, or visit www.streetparkprod.com.

DARK KNIGHT Bruce Wayne in "Batman Begins" . . .

. . . was killer yuppie Patrick Bateman in "American Psycho"

. . . and lost little Jim in "Empire of the Sun."

Growing up

CHRISTIAN BALE, the lost English boy in "Empire of the Sun" and the yuppie serial killer in "American Psycho" is the new Batman.

Titled "Batman Begins," the latest in the Dark Knight's screen chronicles, focuses on the super hero's younger days—his origins, and circumstances that led him away from Gotham City and brought him to London where he honed his detective skills.

The movie, distributed by Warner Bros. and due for release in June, is directed by Christopher Nolan—so expect it to be as dark as "Memento" and as introspective as "Insomnia." Expect it to be a very masculine movie, too, as it stars heavyweights Morgan Freeman, Michael Caine, Gary Oldman, and Liam Neeson as Batman's worthy adversaries.

Araneta Center
LEISURE GUIDE

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BLADE TRINITY
WESLEY SNIPES
KUNG FU HUSTLE
STEPHEN CHOW
ENTENG KABISOTE
VIC SOTTO / KRISTINE HERMOSA
SO HAPPY TOGETHER
KRIS AQUINO / ERIC QUIZON
MANO PO 3
VILMA SANTOS / CHRISTOPHER DE LEON

ALI MALL CINEMAS
1 Dolby OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 SDDS BLADE TRINITY
3 dts KUNG FU HUSTLE
4 Dolby SO HAPPY TOGETHER
5 Dolby ENTENG KABISOTE

ARANETA COLISEUM

Jan. 7	PBA
Jan. 9	
Jan. 12	ALL FILIPINO CUP
Jan. 16	BASKETBALL GAMES
Jan. 29	Martin Nievera & Patti Austin Concert

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SO HAPPY TOGETHER PG13	OCEAN'S TWELVE PG13	BLADE 3: TRINITY R13
KUNG FU HUSTLE PG13	MANO PO 3 GP	OCEAN'S TWELVE PG13

star group of cinemas movie guide IN DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND

starmall EDSA-SHAW
Tel. No. 726.61.50
3 Lastikman
4 Sigaw
5 Panaghoy sa Suba

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
Tel. No. 850.42.85
1 Enteng Kabisote
2 Spirit of the Glass
3 Panaghoy sa Suba
4 Happy Together
5 Lastikman
6 Sigaw

starmall LAS PIÑAS
Tel. No. 873.50.04
1 Sigaw
2 Aishite Masu

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GUARANTEED SEATS
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1 BLADE III
10:40, 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
R-13

2 OCEAN'S 12
11:55, 2:45, 5:35 8:25, 11:05
PG-13

3 KUNG FU HUSTLE
11:00, 1:25, 3:50 6:15, 8:40, 11:00
PG-13

4 HAPPY TOGETHER
11:20, 1:40, 4:00 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
PG-13

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CINEMA 2 KUNG FU HUSTLE PG13
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SHANG CINEPLEX

① OCEAN'S TWELVE
FS 10 40 AM, 1.30PM, 4 20PM 7.10PM, LMF 10.00PM (PG-13)

② KUNG FU HUSTLE
FS 12 20PM, 2.45PM, 5 10PM, 7.35PM, LMF 10.00PM (PG-13)

③ BLADE TRINITY
FS 12PM, 2 30PM, 5PM, 7 30PM LMF 10.00PM (R-13)

④ Special MMFF Promo Price P120
SO HAPPY TOGETHER
FS 12 40 PM, 3PM, 5 20PM, 7 40PM, LMF 10PM (PG-13)

PREMIERE THEATRE Special MMFF Promo Price P236 (includes unlimited popcorn and drinks)
MANO PO 3
(GP)

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GALLERIA 632-9115/16
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE • THX
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
6 OCEAN'S TWELVE
7 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
8 MANO PO 3
9 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
10 SIGAW

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
5 ENTENG KABISOTE
6 RESERVE
7 KUNG FU HUSTLE

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199
1 MANO PO 3
2 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 PANAGHOY SA SUBA
5 OCEAN'S TWELVE
6 SIGAW
7 ENTENG KABISOTE
8 KUNG FU HUSTLE

NOVALICHES 935-3229/31
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
3 MANO PO 3
4 BLADE TRINITY
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE
6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
7 ENTENG KABISOTE
8 SIGAW

PIONEER 687-5378
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575
1 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
2 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 SIGAW

CAINTA 240-4661
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE

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Panaghoy sa Suba • Sigaw • Spirit of the Glass • So...Happy Together

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 MANO PO 3
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
5 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
5 KUNG FU HUSTLE

ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 BLADE TRINITY
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 ENTENG KABISOTE
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 KUNG FU HUSTLE
5 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270
1 SIGAW
2 KUNG FU HUSTLE
3 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
4 ENTENG KABISOTE
5 OCEAN'S TWELVE
6 BLADE TRINITY

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0458
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 MANO PO 3
3 BLADE TRINITY
4 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
5 AISHITE IMASU
6 ENTENG KABISOTE

ILOILO (033) 336-8070
1 OCEAN'S TWELVE
2 MANO PO 3
3 ENTENG KABISOTE
4 BLADE TRINITY
5 SO...HAPPY TOGETHER
6 SPIRIT OF THE GLASS

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Tsunami pries open big H'wood wallets

HOLLYWOOD—Hollywood opened its wallet on Monday to survivors of the tsunami disaster as movie stars Sandra Bullock and Leonardo DiCaprio donated big sums to relief agencies and NBC planned a celebrity-studded TV benefit.

The goodwill gestures of the entertainment industry came as US President George W. Bush and his two immediate predecessors—former Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush, the current president's father—appealed to Americans to contribute to the massive aid effort.

The official death toll from the South Asian tsunami has climbed to almost 150,000, with millions left homeless, hungry and threatened by disease.

The American Red Cross said it received a $1 million donation from Bullock. The star of "Miss Congeniality" and "Speed" previously donated $1 million to the Red Cross in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks.

DiCaprio pledged a "sizable" contribution to the United Nations Children's Fund, targeted for aid to devastated areas of Thailand, where his 2000 film "The Beach," was filmed, said a spokesperson for the actor.

NBC and its sister cable networks—USA, Bravo, Trio, Sci-Fi, MSNBC and CNBC—plan to simulcast a benefit special on Jan. 15 featuring celebrities and musical performances.

The NBC Universal Television Group, a unit of General Electric Co., said the hour-long program would air live on the US East Coast with a tape delay to the West Coast. Phone lines for viewer donations will be kept open throughout the evening.

Clear Channel Communications has signed on to promote the event through its chain of radio stations, the nation's largest.

Plans for the NBC telecast were reminiscent of a two-hour telethon carried by all four major US TV networks 10 days after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. That special, called "America: A Tribute to Heroes," raised more than $150 million in pledges.

Media conglomerate News Corp. also announced a $1 million contribution to tsunami relief and reconstruction and pledged to match employee donations dollar for dollar. News Corp. chair Rupert Murdoch called on his US-based media companies to make print and air time available to solicit donations. *Reuters*

DICAPRIO

BULLOCK

Celebrating Cebuano cinema

CESAR Montano will be cited for producing and directing "Panaghoy sa Suba," in which he also stars with Juliana Palermo.

FOR THE 12th edition of its annual "Pelikula at Lipunan," the National Commission for Culture and the Arts had declared 2005 as "Cebuano Film Year."

Organizers said this is meant to call attention to the "disappearance" of Cebuano cinema and initiate moves for its revival. Cebuano cinema's popularity once rivaled that of Tagalog films.

Festival director Nick Deocampo has organized screenings of a handful of Cebuano films that have been preserved. The Cebu Filmmakers' Society Foundation, Inc. headed by Bien Fernandez will also mount photo exhibits and conduct relevant panel discussions and workshops.

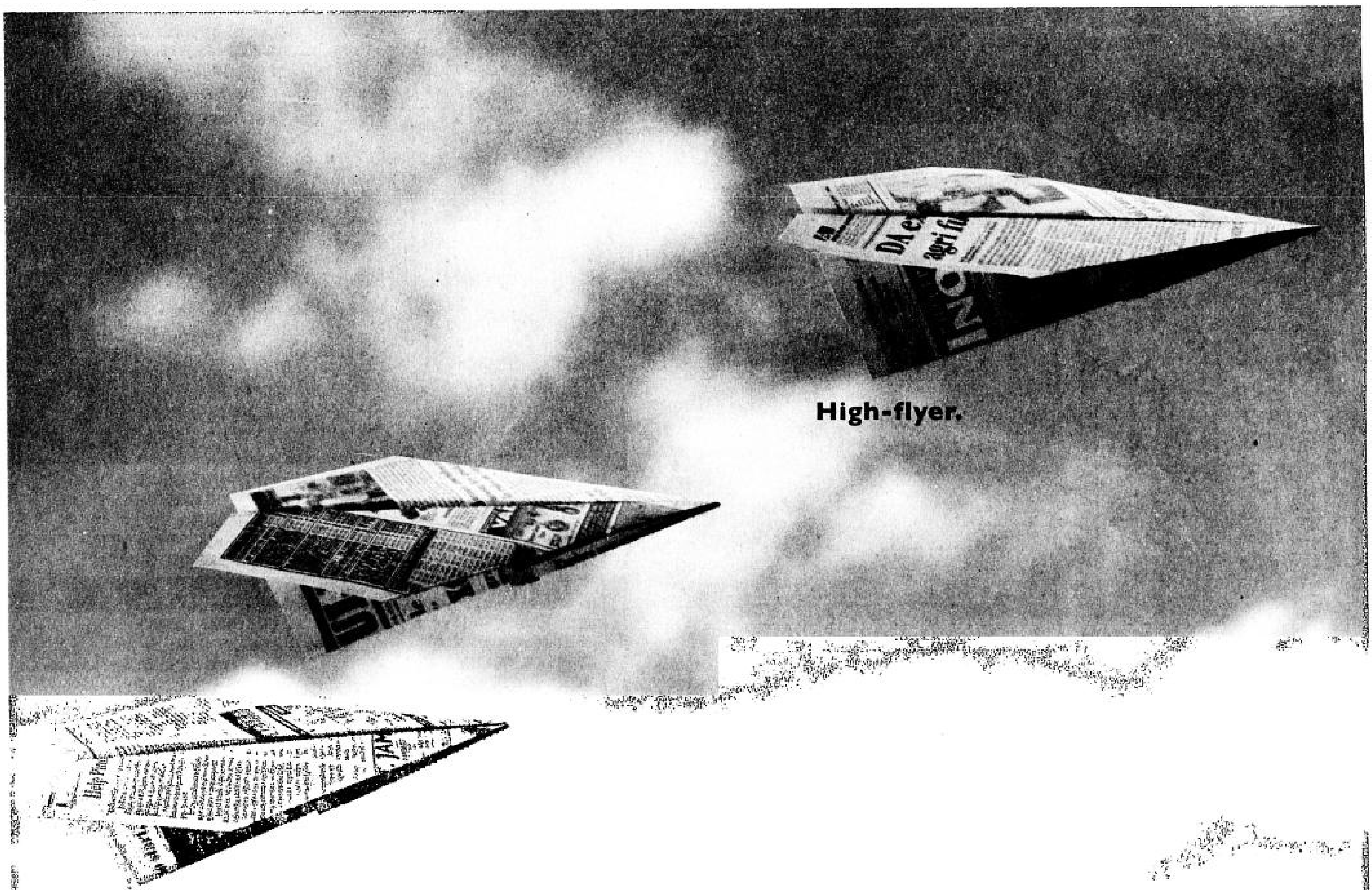
A regional tour of the featured movies will start in SM Cebu and proceed to Iloilo City. The festival winds up in SM Megamall in Mandaluyong.

The five-day filmfest kicks off with a recognition night that will honor veteran artists of Cebuano movies, including Gloria Sevilla and her late husband Mat Ranillo, director Gene Labella, cinematographer Luis Chiong and actress Caridad Sanchez.

A special recognition will be given to actor-director Cesar Montano for producing "Panaghoy sa Suba," winner of major awards in the last Metro Manila Film Festival.

Movies to be screened are; "Badlis sa Kinabuhi," "Matud Nila," "Ikaduhang Bathala," "Ikasakit sa Kinabuhi" and the celebrated comedy shot in super-8 film, "Ang Manok ni San Pedro"—said to be the world's first super-8 full length film blown up to 35mm and commercially released.

"Pelikula at Lipunan" 2005 is being held in cooperation with Mowelfund Film institute, Cebu Filmmakers' Society (Foundation) Inc. Sinulog Foundation, the Cebu provincial and city governments, and SM Cinemas.



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